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THE NEW YORKER

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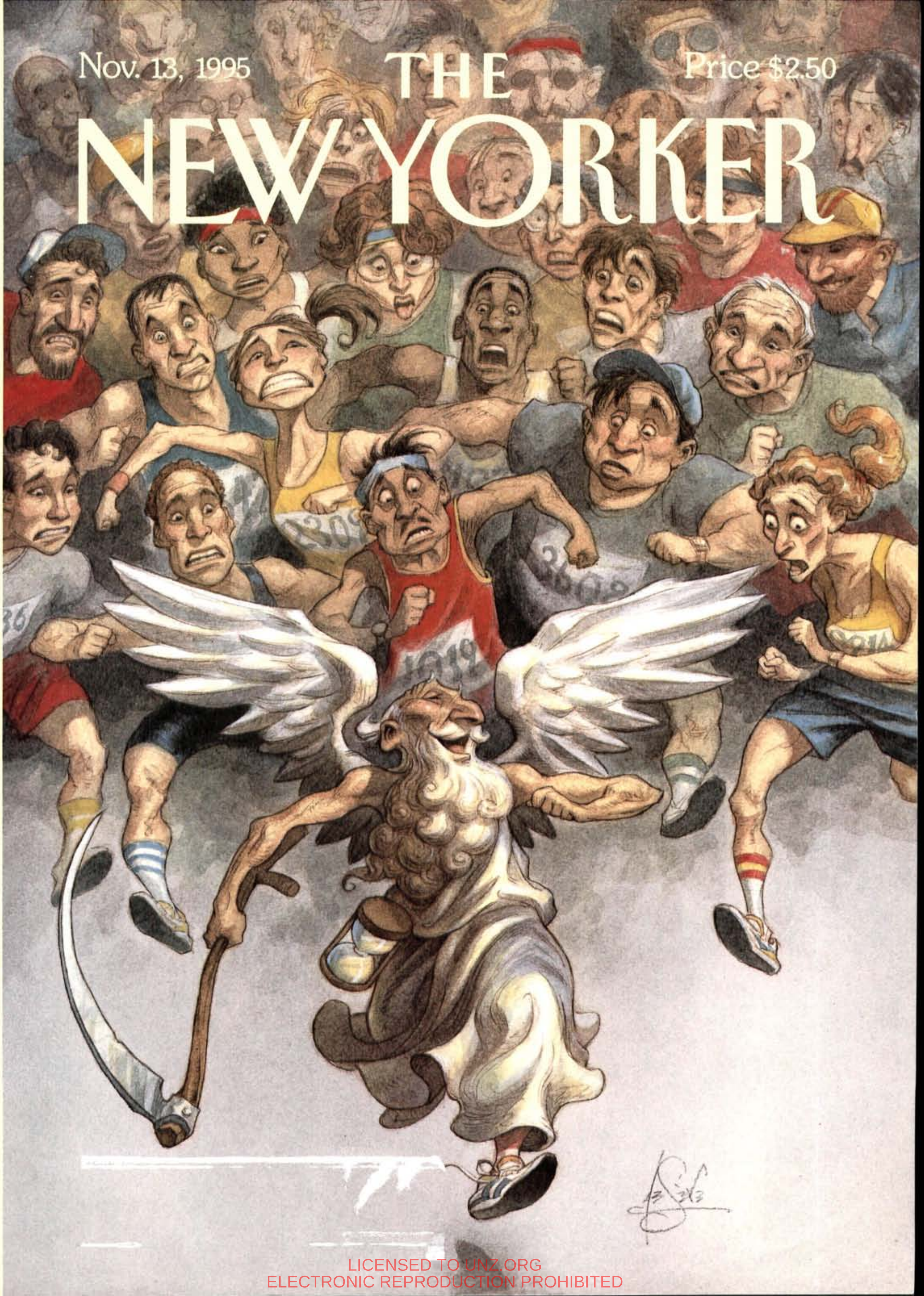

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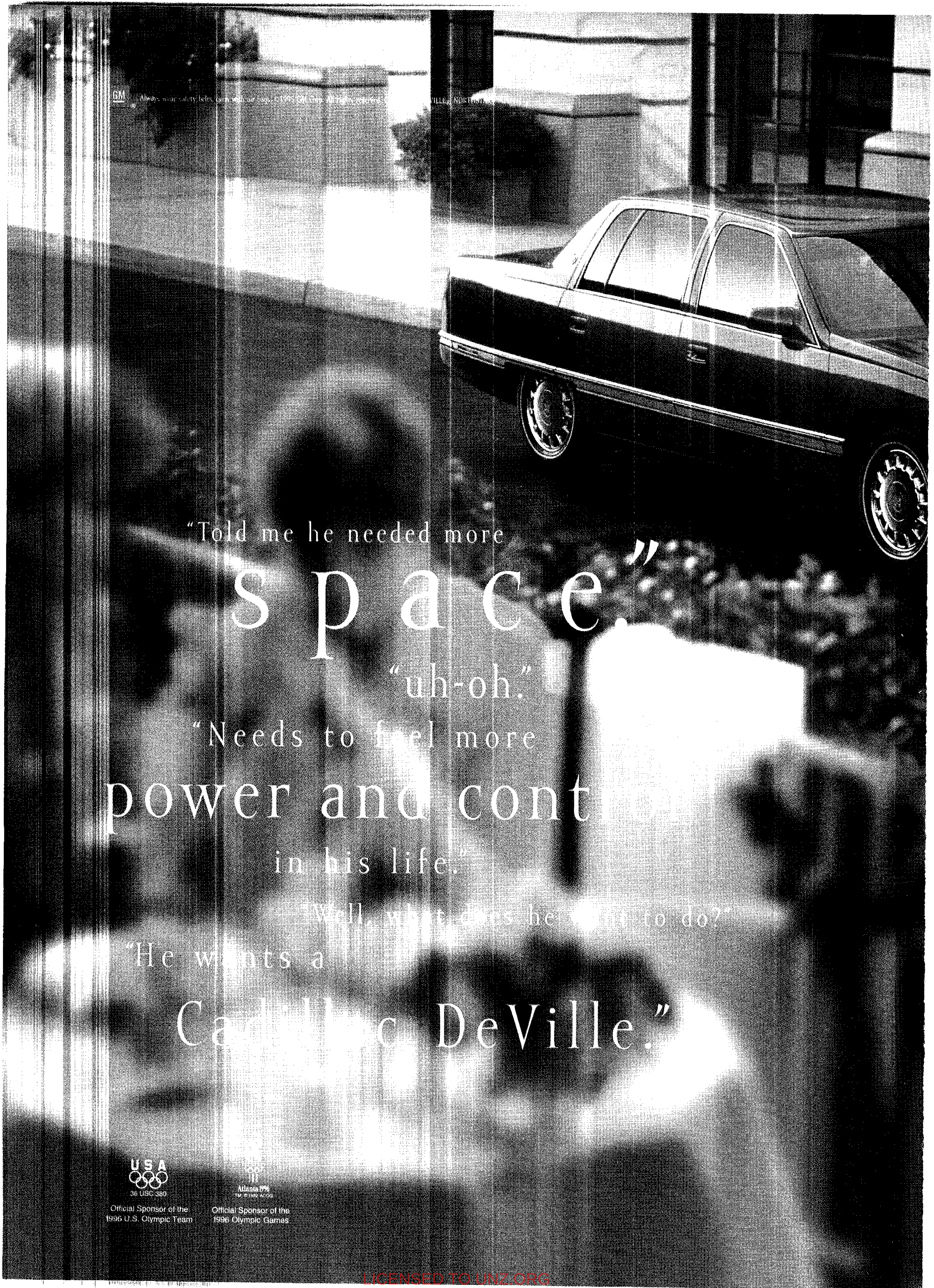
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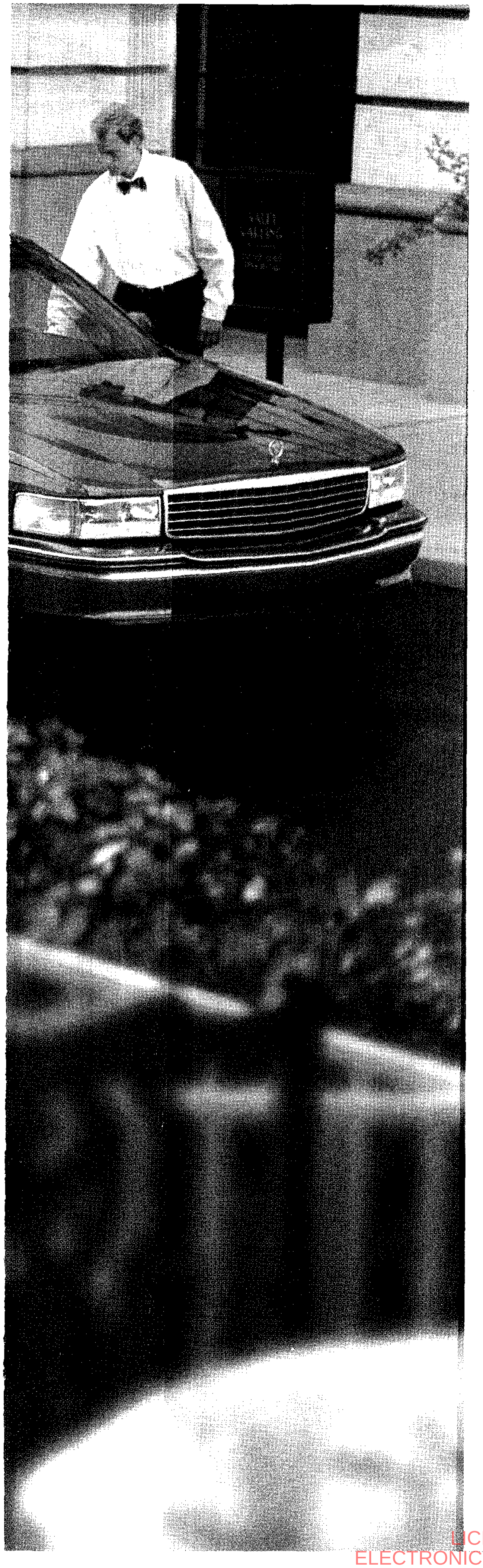

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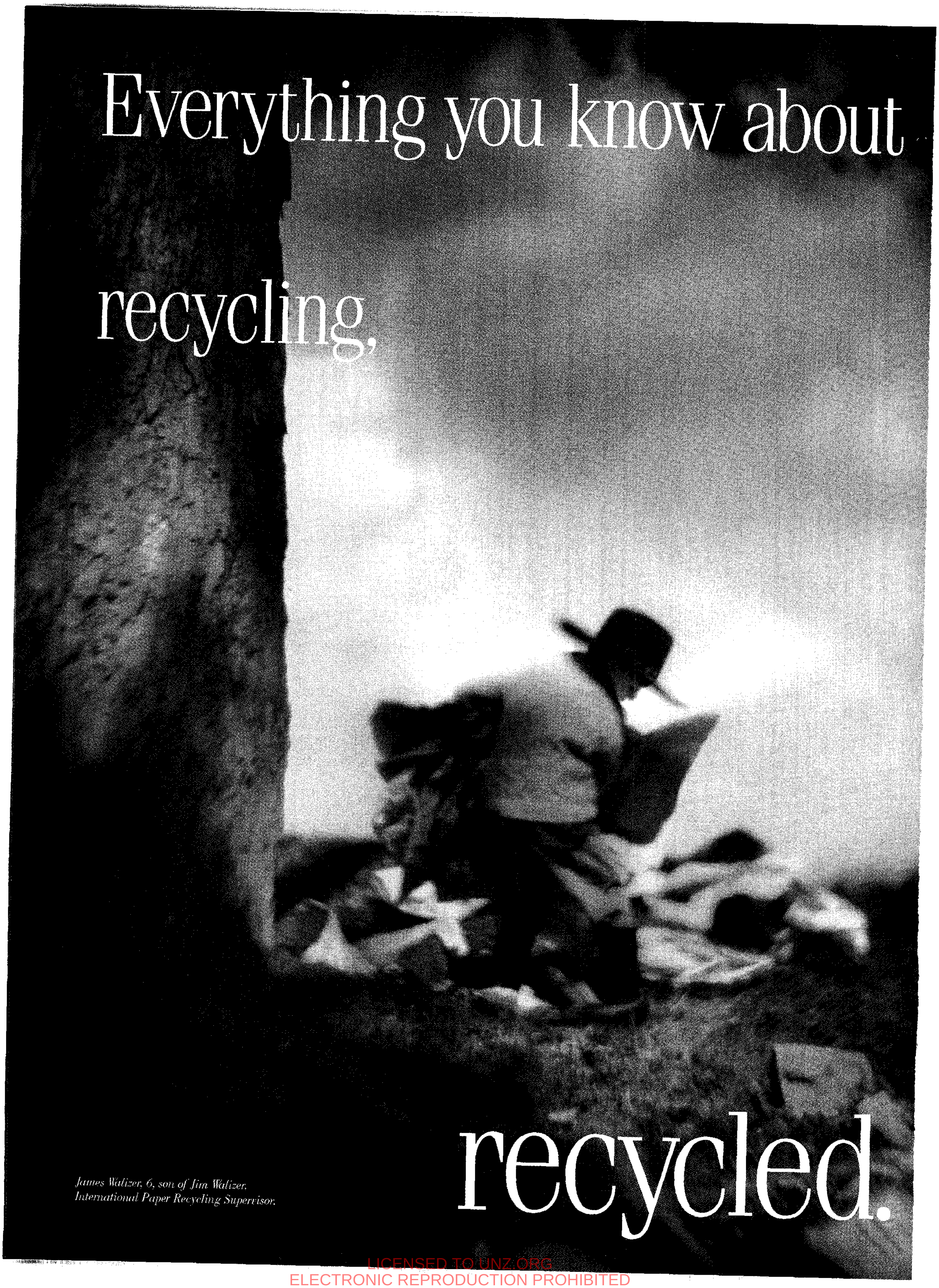
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*James Walizer, 6, son of Jim Walizer,
International Paper Recycling Supervisor.*

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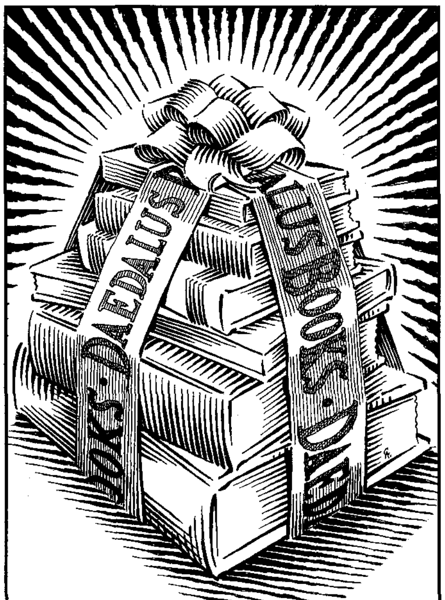
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THE NEW YORKER

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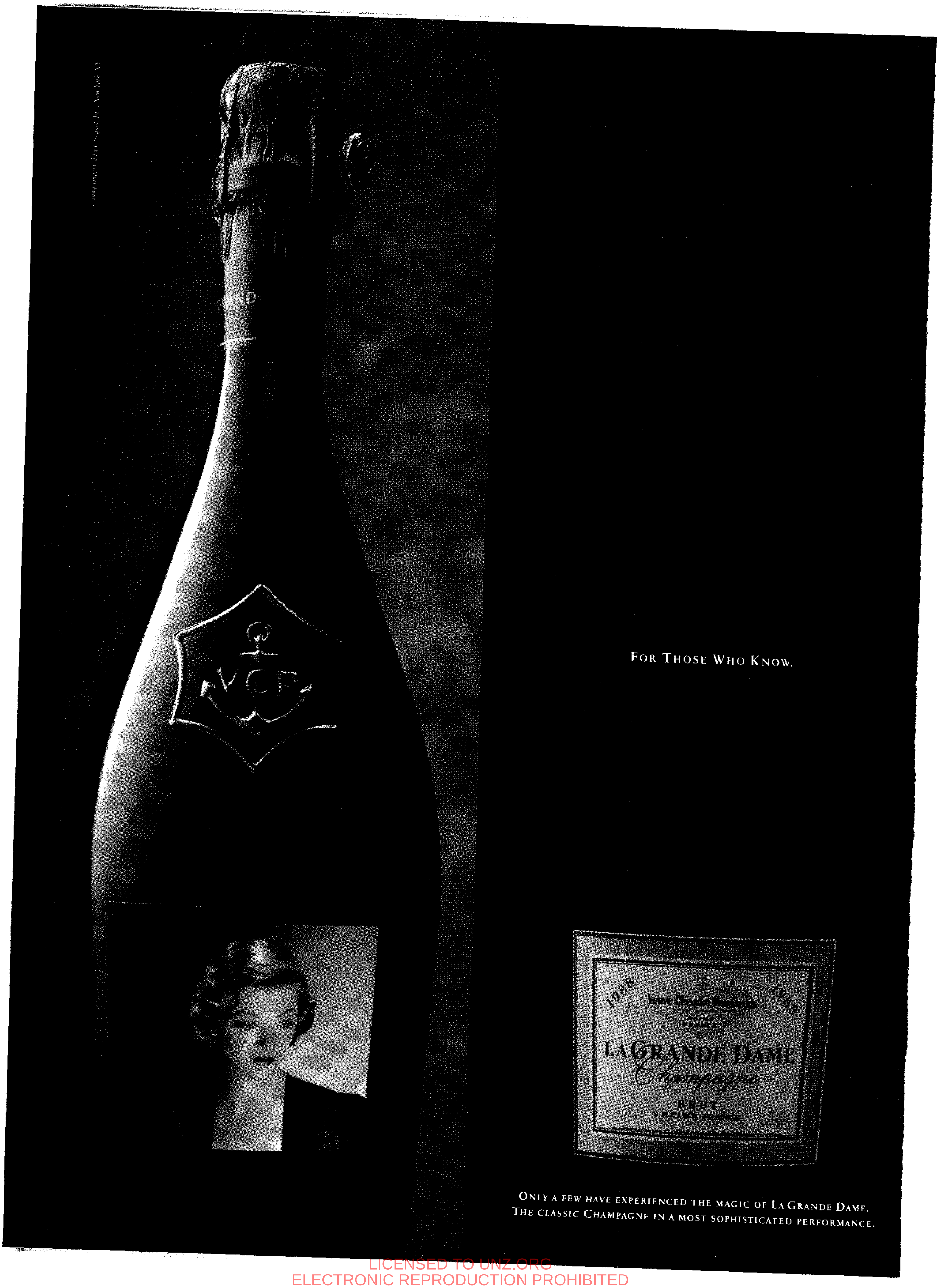

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COMMENT

THE VOTE IN QUEBEC

Un peuple qui n'accepte pas de disparaître.

CANADA and Canada's smaller neighbor to the south are both to be congratulated—with some reservations—on the vote the other day that barely kept the French-speaking province of Quebec from claiming separate sovereignty and thus breaking up the Canadian federation. True, we have recently seen Chechnya, Rwanda, and Bosnia, among other places ending in "a," fall into chaos and despair. But Canada? Warm-hearted, stable, fair to its many minorities, staunch in the cause of justice and democracy, Canada is one of the world's most highly respected countries. As its Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien, told a Montreal rally just before the vote, non-Canadians cannot understand why anyone would want to leave it. Yet a large majority—sixty per cent, by some counts—of Mr. Chrétien's fellow Quebec-born Francophones voted to do just that. This calls for explanation and, from both Canadians and Americans, understanding.

For the short term, however, a disaster has been narrowly averted—a switch of a mere thirty-odd thousand votes would have sent the verdict the other way—and we can all be grateful to those who made the vital difference. President Clinton offered the tactful hope that America would remain partners with a stable and strong—that is, a united—Canada. President Jacques Chirac of France said carefully that France would recognize not an independent Quebec but "the facts"—a pledge that inflamed no one. And a million or more rest-of-Canadians rallied, sent postcards, made telephone calls, or visited Montreal in person, all delivering the same message: they wanted Quebec to stay in the family. The response from those Quebeckers who voted No was at least unambiguous: they all wanted to remain Canadians.

Nobody can say, however, what the Yes voters really had in mind, because the question they answered was—either deliberately or through sloppy drafting—equivocal, if not downright dishonest. Voters were not asked whether they favored a sovereign Quebec, answer *Oui* or *Non*. Rather, the ballot informed them that sovereignty was to happen only after "a formal offer . . . for a new Economic and Political Partnership" had been made to Canada "within the scope of" two further documents—a lengthy list of Quebec's proposals and a political understand-

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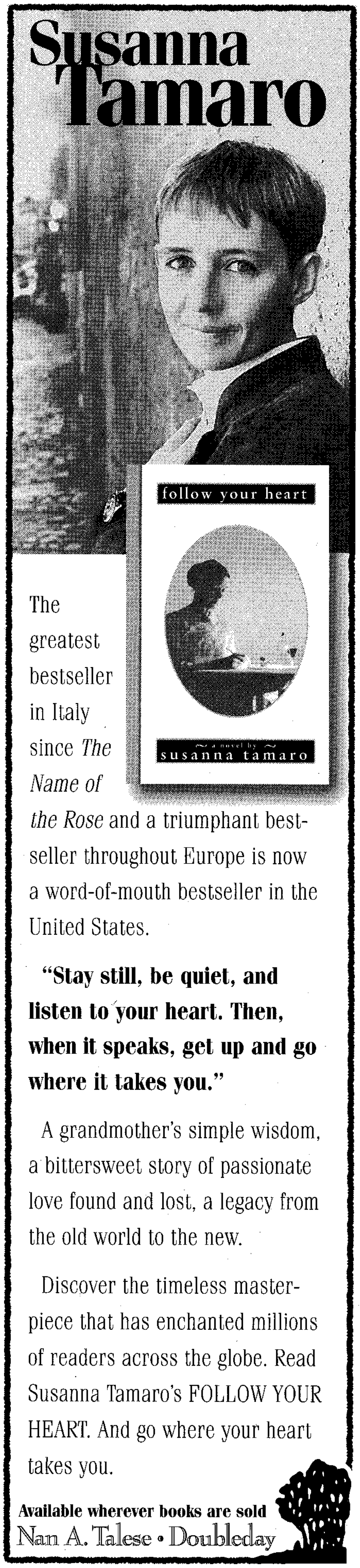

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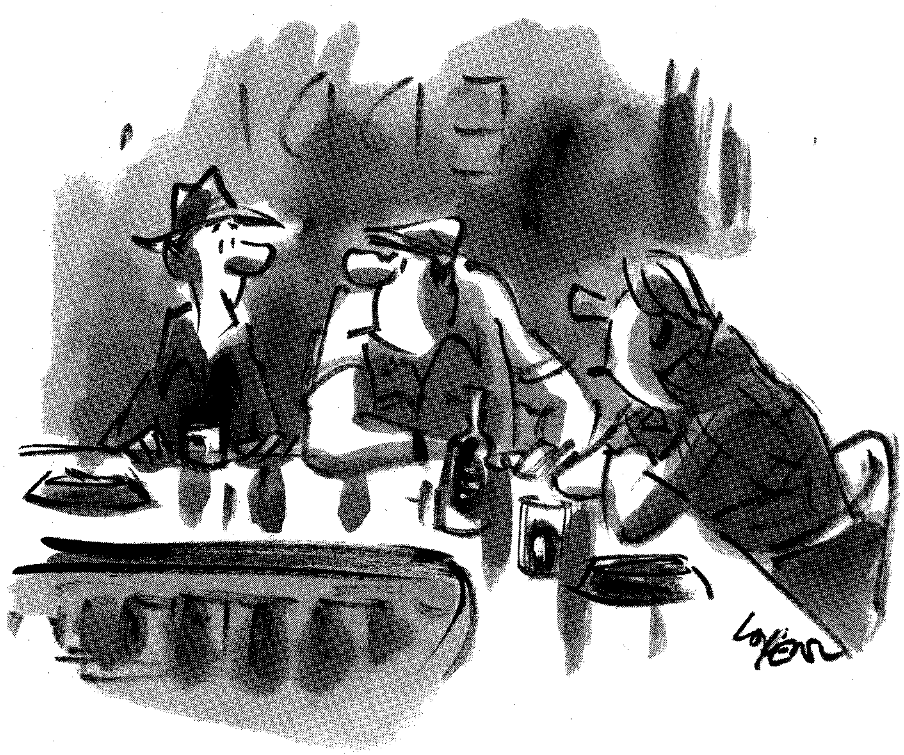

"I'm like Gingrich—ten per cent of me wants to be President, but ninety per cent of me is perfectly happy here at Eddie's Bar & Grill."

• •

ing. A Yes win would thus have been no more than a mandate to negotiate.

Since almost all Quebeckers (and many other Canadians, too) want new federal arrangements for Canada as a whole, the question could easily have been read as no more than a forceful call for nationwide talks. According to one poll, a majority of the Yes voters thought they could keep Canadian citizenship and social benefits after "independence," whereas at least one separatist Quebec politician promised that the province would become "our own country . . . the next day." Many voters must have suspected that, if Yes won, Quebec's cloudy future might never again be put to a referendum. Wisely cautious, they may well have been the ones who tipped the delicate balance to No, thereby averting instant chaos and a run on the already shaky Canadian dollar.

The separatist case in Quebec is muddled, even semi-fraudulent, but is it without merit? Emphatically, no. It is built more on fear than on hope, though, as some slips by the Yes leaders disclosed. Two weeks before the poll, Lucien Bouchard, easily the most dynamic of them, complained that Quebec women were having fewer babies than almost any women anywhere "of the white race." The reference to race set many Canadians' teeth on edge, but Bouchard's arithmetic was correct. French Canadians long had the highest birthrate ever sustained anywhere, with twenty children in a family not uncommon. Since the nineteen-sixties, the birthrate has fallen to 1.6 children per *Québécoise*—the lowest in Canada, and well below the replacement level. The French Canadians, colloquially known as *pure laine* ("100% wool"), fear they are dying out, after four hundred and fifty years in North America—most of which they were the first to explore and pioneer, as the names of Detroit, St. Louis, New Orleans, and many other solidly American cities remind us.

Attempts to attract French-speakers—Algerians, Haitians, Vietnamese, Lebanese, and so on—to Quebec have backfired politically. In a revealing outburst right after the vote, Jacques Parizeau, the separatist Quebec Premier (who has since announced his resignation), blamed the defeat largely on "the ethnic vote." He refused to elaborate, but many think that by "ethnic vote" he meant the twenty per cent of Quebec people who are not pure wool, including almost all the French-speaking immigrants, who value Canadian citizenship and are known, from polls, to have massively voted No to separation.

Here we are at the heart of the misunderstanding between Quebec and the rest of Canada, and we can sense the underlying anxieties that fuel it. Many pure wools, with their numbers dwindling and their French-based culture under attack, as they see it, from the cheerful consumerism of English-speaking North America, have turned to a nineteenth-century remedy—nationalism. Undoubtedly, with their long history, their language, their ties of blood, and the conservative Catholicism that still shapes their thinking, they are a true nation, in a sense that Garibaldi—or Theodor Herzl, for that matter—would have understood. Canada, by contrast, is a nation in the late-twentieth-century style: people of many backgrounds who share the same land and the same principles, and try to benefit from many cultures and creeds, in equality and mutual toleration. With lavish resources, English-speaking Canada—like Australia or the United States, or even Britain, modestly endowed though it is—has no trouble attracting immigrants, yet this is something that a nation based on blood and speech can't do. The whole English-speaking world now accepts the new principles, at least in principle; but Quebec does not belong to the English-speaking world.

Few French Canadians dispute the threat to their language and culture. Prime Minister Chrétien (one of a family of nineteen, as it happens), who, in a *magnifique* display of sang-froid, led the No camp to its narrow victory without making any promises he could not keep, feels that danger as much as any Quebec separatist; he differs from the separatists only in being convinced that French-Canadian culture and speech can be best protected inside a united Canada. In view of the virtual disappearance of French among French-speaking immigrants to the United States, and among the remnant in Louisiana, the Quebeckers' anxiety is not misplaced.

The survival of the French of North America, and of their French, is important to us all, and is, indeed, in line with the goal of benefitting from many cultures. The French Canadians have been the bravest of partners in the shaping of this continent, and of Canada in particular. To acknowledge as much is only historical justice. They are emerging from a hard winter, intellectually speaking, and some of the ice still has to melt. They merit all the understanding that their fellow-Canadians, and the rest of us, have to give. —MURRAY SAYLE

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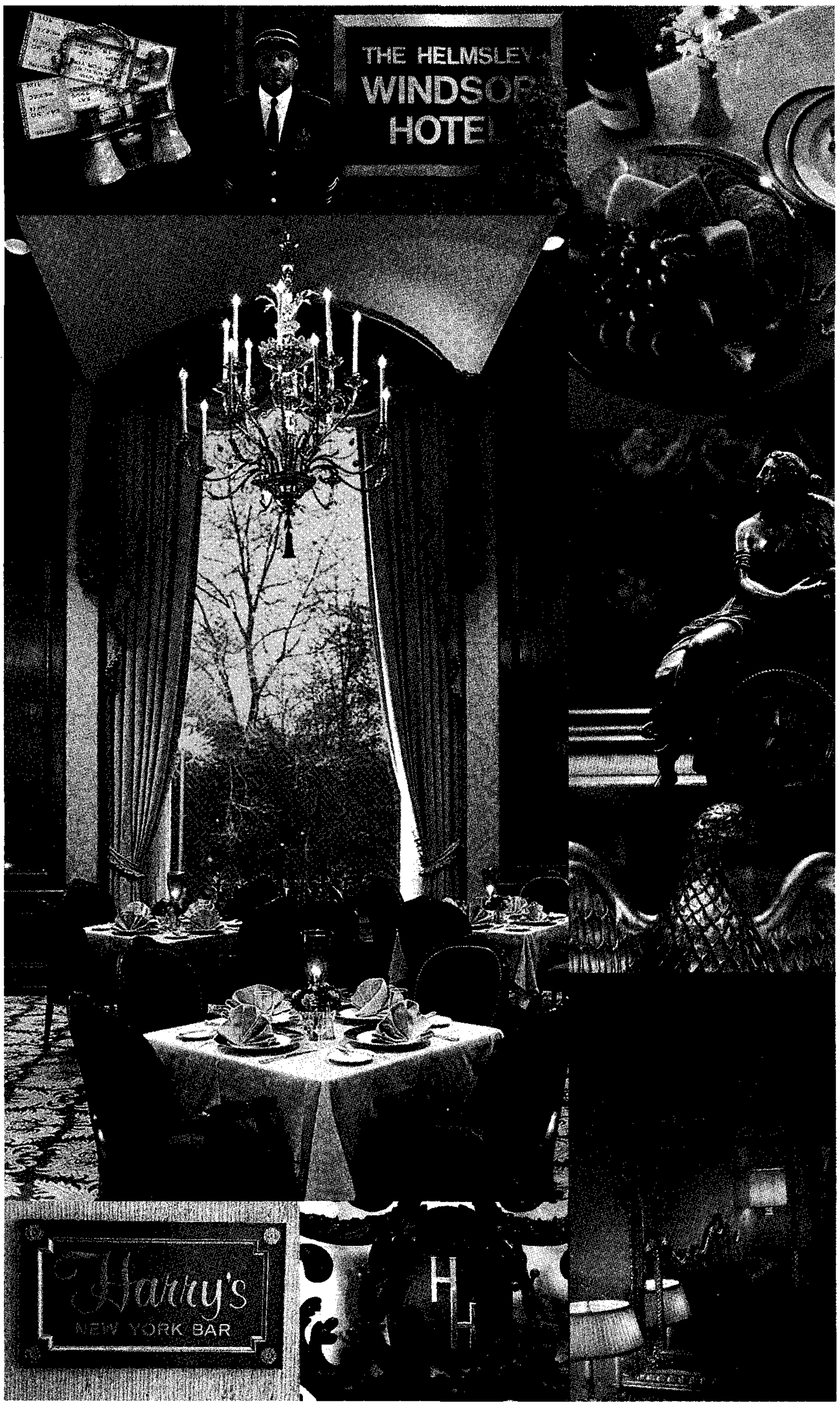

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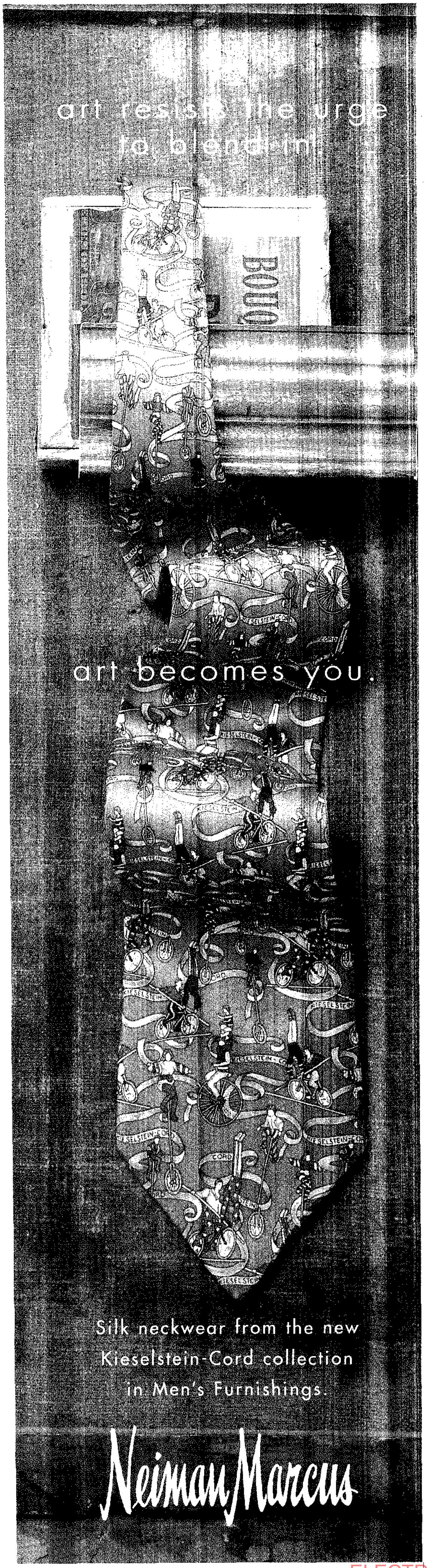

IN THE MAIL

BIBLE BEATERS

"Scripture Rescripted," Anthony Lane's review of "The New Testament and Psalms: An Inclusive Version" (Books, October 2nd), was a revelation—of ignorance. Lane may be a fine critic for films, but not for translations. Should he have waited for the video?

He dislikes our views on language, sexual equality, God "beyond gender," and the risen Christ's universality. Fine—but he also misrepresents our scholarship. Much of what he condemns is from the New Revised Standard Version, which we adapted. His criticism? That it is not the King James Version! We phrase I Corinthians 7, "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence" (K.J.V.), as "The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights." Lane calls this "simple law-talk," but Greek manuscripts earlier and more accurate than any available when the King James Version was written, in 1611, show the "law-talk" to be what Paul wrote. (A similar change is in the New International Version, a favorite of those notoriously politically correct conservative evangelicals.)

And does calling Phoebe a "deacon" rather than a "servant of the church" plug women's ordination? No: "deacon" (*diakonos*) simply represents the Greek original. This display of ignorance, unequalled since Adam played dumb about that apple, results from Lane's search for a hidden agenda. Finding none, he creates one. If he apologizes nicely, we might send him a photograph of Burton Throckmorton as Groucho Marx.

DONALD KRAUS
Senior Editor for Bibles
Oxford University Press
New York City

It made me feel good to read Anthony Lane's review of the new Inclusive Version of the Bible and to realize that there are still people out there who really care. The old hierarchies have caused great pain, and we ought to save the generations to come from texts that wallow in such outmoded élitism.

But I was hurt to see that one of the cruellest slurs still remains: There are many atheists sharing our planet, and they are people, too, with feelings just like the rest of us. Surely the editors of this new version of the Bible could have found some way to leave out all references to God. After all, is He really necessary in a book that purports to offer comfort and hope to us all? Wouldn't it be fairer and nicer to find some twelve-step program, in the Sermon on the Mount, perhaps, that would apply to everyone?

EDWARD KADLETZ
Muncie, Ind.

POST RIPOSTE

David Remnick wrote in his piece on the former Washington *Post* executive editor Ben Bradlee ("Last of the Red Hots," September 18th) that "the *Post* had the goods on Bob Packwood's chronic tongue thrusting and waist grabbing, yet it waited until three weeks after the elections to run a story." Not true. We did not have enough information to publish a story before the election. As soon as we did have enough information—and it took three more weeks to get to that point—we ran the story.

STEVE LUXENBERG
The Washington *Post*
Washington, D.C.

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THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Black Girl—Leslie Uggams plays Mama Rosie, in J. E. Franklin's drama about a seventeen-year-old high-school dropout up against her family's expectations. Previews begin Nov. 9. Opens Nov. 12 at 3. (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. 598-0400.)

Bring In 'Da Noise, Bring In 'Da Funk—A new musical by tap virtuoso Savion Glover, spoken-word artist Reg E. Gaines, and director George C. Wolfe, which stars Glover and Gaines. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

Chinoiserie—Part two of Ping Chong's multimedia trilogy, about the historical clash of Eastern and Western cultures. Opens Nov. 14 at 7 and continues through Nov. 18. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100.)

Danny Gans on Broadway—The impressionist makes his Broadway début. Opens Nov. 8 at 8:15. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

Double Identity—The Folksbiene Playhouse presents a new Yiddish musical. Simultaneous translations in English and in Russian will be available. In previews through Nov. 11. Opens Nov. 12 at 5:30. (123 E. 55th St. 755-2231.)

June and Jean in Concert—The Signature Theatre Company's Adrienne Kennedy season continues with the playwright's autobiographical play about two sisters. Opens Nov. 10 at 8 and runs through Dec. 10. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

Juno and the Paycock—Sean O'Casey's 1924 tragicomedy, in an Irish Rep production directed by Charlotte Moore. Previews begin Nov. 10. (132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

The Monogamist—A poet discovers that his wife is having an affair with one of her students, in Christopher Kyle's satirical comedy. Directed by Scott Elliott. In previews through Nov. 8. Opens Nov. 9 at 7:30. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Por' Knockers—A group of political activists inadvertently kill several children when they blow up a government building, in Lynn Nottage's latest play. Previews begin Nov. 8. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874.)

Quills—A new drama by Doug Wright, in which the Marquis de Sade outsmarts the would-be censors who run the insane asylum to which he has been committed. Directed by Howard Shalwitz. In previews. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 460-5475.)

Racing Demon—In David Hare's play, a group of Anglican clergymen confronts the problems of operating a parish in inner-city London. Directed by Richard Eyre. In previews. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Splendora—A new musical directed by Jack Hofsiss and choreographed by Robert LaFosse, about a man who returns to his hometown with an enigmatic woman and an urge to delve into his past. Book by Peter Webb. Preview on Nov. 8. Opens Nov. 9 at 8 and continues through Nov. 19. (American Place Theatre, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

Wake Up Call—Camryn Manheim takes center stage with her autobiographical solo comedy "Wake Up, I'm Fat!" in the Public's three-week festival of performance art, cabaret, and monologues. Opens Nov. 9 at 8 and continues through Nov. 26. (425 Lafayette St. For more information, call 260-2400.)

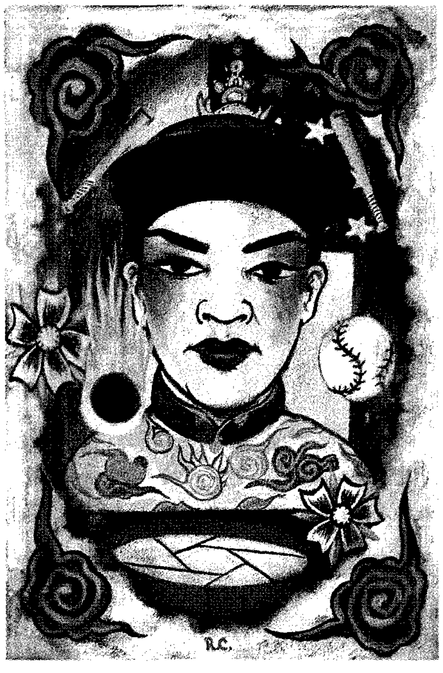
The Warm-Up—Sammy Shore's one-man comedy about his career as the opening act for such stars as Elvis Presley, Frank Sinatra, and Sammy Davis, Jr. Martin Landau directed. In previews. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Antigone—The Pearl Theatre Company presents Sophocles' tragedy. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802.)

Chris Durang & Dawne—The talented, funny playwright Christopher Durang is also a talented, wildly funny performer, and here, with Sherry Anderson and John Augustine as his partners in musical crime, he roasts musical chestnuts as well as some of the more ridiculous songs that have floated to the top of the charts. (Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 799-4599. Closes Nov. 11.)

Company—The god of casting doesn't shine on the Roundabout Theatre Company's revival of Stephen Sondheim and George Furth's 1970 musical, but nothing can dim the brilliance of a score whose themes of fear, loneliness, and anxiety in relationships have become more urgent as the battle between the sexes has intensified. Directed by Scott Ellis. (Reviewed in our issue of 10/23/95.) (Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)



Shi-Zheng Chen, in "Chinoiserie."

ROB CLAYTON

Crocodiles in the Potomac—Wendy Belden's Washington comedy, about the effect of the Watergate hearings on the lives of four people, tries to cover too much ground in an hour and three-quarters. The dialogue is compelling and clever, and the ensemble cast works well together, but the disparate themes don't resonate beyond the theatre doors. (Theatre Row Theatre, 424 W. 42nd St. 765-1706. Closes Nov. 12.)

Cuba Libre—A song-and-dance celebration with three preëminent stars of the Cuban stage: the singer Annia Linares (who seems to shoot each heartfelt line out through the tips of her talonlike nails), the dancer Sonia Calero (who's propelled across the stage not by footwork but by the pulsing of her entire upper body), and the singer and pianist Meme Solis (all rousing arpeggios and silky crooning), who together set a very Old Country mood. Eduardo Oliva is Calero's underutilized dance partner. (INTAR, 420 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Dangerous Corner—As directed by David Mamet, the characters in J. B. Priestley's 1932 mystery—a meditation on the fragile interconnectedness of people's lives—don't seem connected at all, and the way he has depressed the pace allows you to guess the worst before it is, inevitably, revealed. The real mystery is why everyone onstage seems so strangely wooden. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 239-6200.)

The Food Chain—Although the situations in Nicky Silver's new play are familiar and sitcomish, the writing is tangy and memorably funny, and the actors give smart, wonderfully fresh performances. Robert Falls directed. (9/11/95) (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

Fool Moon—Clowning and music with Bill Irwin, David Shiner, and North Carolina's Red Clay Ramblers, who have returned to Broadway with their 1993 show. (Ambassador, 215 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

Full Gallop—Mary Louise Wilson's vibrant and unexpectedly touching portrayal of Diana Vreeland—"Delightful, delicious, *divine*!" Directed by Nicholas Martin. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes Nov. 19.)

Hello, Dolly!—Carol Channing reprises the role of Dolly Levi, which she created in the 1963 musical. Lee Roy Reams directs. (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

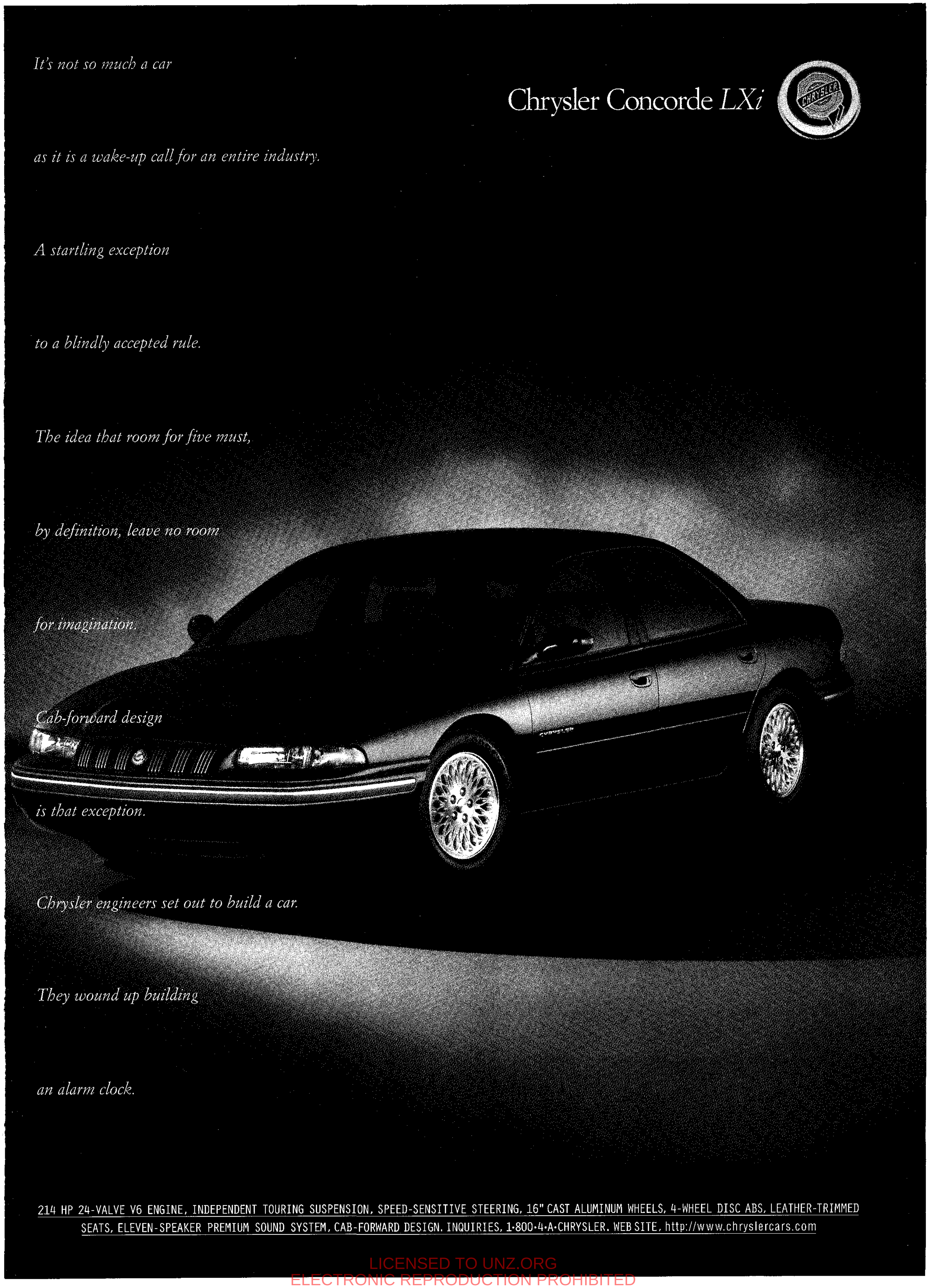
Master Class—Zoe Caldwell is Maria Callas in Terrence McNally's examination of the diva as teacher. Leonard Foglia is the director. (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Memorandum—Václav Havel's scathing 1966 play, an indictment of bureaucracy and its abuses, in a rousing production by the Independent Theatre Company. The office-from-hell at the play's core, rife with conspiracies and betrayals, is well served by a white labyrinthine set, where the actors pace like trapped animals. Though the acting shades, at times, into histrionics, there are strong performances by Mary Coburn as a villainous technocrat, Seth Rosmarin as her henchman, and Aviva Stei as a secretary who is interested only in her next meal. Michelle Gigante directs. (House of Candles Theatre, 99 Stanton St. 353-3088. Closes Nov. 25.)

Mrs. Klein—Uta Hagen stars in a suspense drama by Nicholas Wright, about the death, in 1934, of psychoanalyst Melanie Klein's son. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

The Model Apartment—The characters in Donald Margulies' play—about a German-Jewish couple who retire from Brooklyn to Florida and are followed not only by their crippling concentration-camp memories but also by their mentally disturbed daughter—are barely three-dimensional, but Lynn Cohen and Paul Stolarsky bring real life to the parents, who have dealt with their pain well enough to function but have damaged their daughter severely in the process. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052. Closes Nov. 12.)

Moon Over Buffalo—Ken Ludwig's backstage farce is as forgettable as Carol Burnett (whose last Broadway appearance was thirty years ago) is not: our reigning red-headed queen of comedy is delightful to behold. Tom Moore



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directed. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Moonlight—In Harold Pinter's first full-length play since 1978, Jason Robards is both avuncular and acrimonious in the role of a dying man whose sons refuse to visit him; Blythe Danner, who plays his wife, conveys silent torment through her superbly expressive eyes. The director, Karel Reisz, has excavated the suffering beneath their sarcasm and perfectly captured Pinter's sense of dread. Also with Melissa Chalsma, Barry McEvoy, and Liev Schreiber. (11/6/95) (Laura Pels, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

Moscow Stations—Tom Courtenay plays equal parts underground man and commuting mixologist, in an anecdotal two-act monologue adapted from the 1969 samizdat novel (published in 1980) by Venidikt Yerofeyev. Ian Brown directed. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.)

Murder at Minsing Manor: A Nancy-Boys Mystery—In another antic romp by the Ridiculous Theatrical Company, Everett Quinton plays an aging temptress who may or may not have dispatched her sugar daddy, the TV vampire Marius Minsing. Two boy sleuths, a crazed F.B.I. agent, a panting priest, and an ingénue who is literally Janus-faced try to solve the mystery. Some of the jokes are more subtle than others, but the satire of church, state, and the Hardy Boys is right on target. Written by the brothers Michael and Richard Simon and directed by Chuck Brown. (Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 239-6200.)

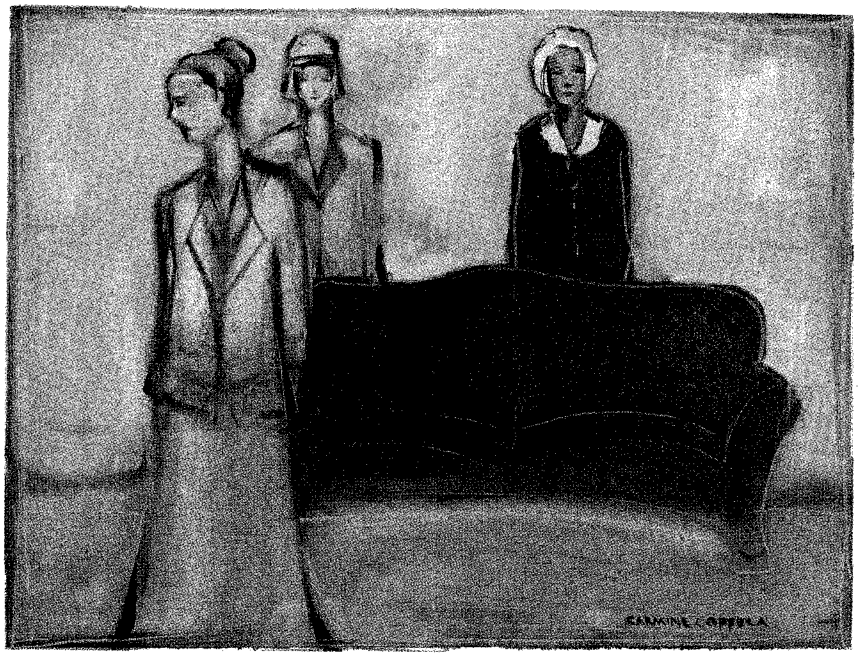
Nathan the Wise—In Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's 1779 plea for religious tolerance—an odd combination of soap opera and theology, set in Jerusalem between the First and Second Crusades—a wise Jew, a Knight Templar, and the Muslim hero Saladin overcome their prejudices and help each other. This Jean Cocteau Repertory production would (like many of the Cocteau's projects) benefit from judicious cutting, but the notion that truth, especially truth in religion, is where you find it is startlingly relevant. Craig Smith, as the wise Jew Nathan, is one of the few actors to balance the play's competing concerns; he gives the production what power it has. Abner Genece provides superb comic relief as a friar. The unfocussed (and occasionally campy) direction is by Scott Shattuck. Runs in repertory with a solid production of Beckett's "Waiting for Godot." (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

New England—A dark comedy by Richard Nelson, about a family of English transplants at odds with America. Directed by Howard Davies. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Northeast Local—Tom Donaghy's play, which begins in the early sixties and ends in the early nineties, stars Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio and Anthony LaPaglia as a working-class couple who come together and then break apart. (The terrific period costumes, by Jane Greenwood, indicate the march of time with great accuracy.) Both the writing and the performances make for an uneven evening. The wan Mastrantonio plays an open-minded woman who comes across as almost simpleminded (lines like "Everything's changing, Mick—the whole world is changing" don't help). LaPaglia, on the other hand, is becoming one of those actors who never make a wrong move and yet are totally alive, and he gives the play an authenticity it wouldn't otherwise have. Also with Terry Alexander and Eileen Heckart, who is dead on as Mickey's acid mother. Gerald Gutierrez, who performed such magic as the director of "The Heiress," didn't quite pull the rabbit out of the hat this time. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Old, Wicked Songs—An American pianist in Vienna undergoes a spiritual awakening, in a new play by Jon Marans. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000. Closes Nov. 19.)

Patti LuPone on Broadway—With her Garland-size renditions of her musical-theatre triumphs ("Don't Cry for Me, Argentina"; "As If We Never Said Goodbye"), the star confirms her place among all the other divas on the midtown marquees. (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)



Laila Robins, Amy Wright, and Uta Hagen, in "Mrs. Klein."

CARMINE COPPOLA

Picasso at the Lapin Agile—Steve Martin's comedy, set in a Paris bar in 1904, is not so much a play of ideas as a play of notions, about art, science, the twentieth century (oh, *that* old thing); it features two wild and crazy guys—Einstein and Picasso—sittin' around talkin' about how they're going to change the world, and contains a satisfying amount of Martin's coolly absurdist humor. Mark Nelson is a delightful, sparky Einstein, but Tim Hopper's Picasso is a big bore—The Artist Who Came to Dinner. The secondary characters are well drawn and, under the direction of Randall Arney, well played by, among others, Peter Jacobson (of "Compleat Shkspr" fme), John Christopher Jones, Rondi Reed, and Harry Groener. Yet there's a sourness to the proceedings which may put you off, unless you happen to believe, as Martin seems to, that the arrival of rock and roll ruined everything. Say it ain't so, Steverino. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

Private Lives—A Pan Asian Repertory Theatre production of Noël Coward's comedy. (Playhouse 46 at St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 245-2660. Closes Nov. 18.)

Riff Raff—In this drama written and directed by Laurence Fishburne, three desperate men (Fishburne, Titus Welliver, and Heavy D) hole up on the Lower East Side and sort through the residue of a botched robbery attempt. The play strains to make its point about the way loyalties shift among old friends, and the direction is often not as taut as it might be, but there are enough white-hot moments to hold the audience's interest. Heavy D's rap recitation late in the show is worth the price of admission. (Circle Repertory Company, 159 Bleecker St. 239-6200.)

Sacrilege—Ellen Burstyn, Giancarlo Esposito, and Herb Foster star in a new play by Diane Shaffer, about a Manhattan nun who wants to become a priest. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Swinging on a Star—A stylish, heartfelt showcase for the songs of Johnny Burke (1908-64), among them "Pennies from Heaven," "Misty," and "Thank Your Lucky Stars and Stripes." Occasionally the show tries harder than it has to (with audio testimonials from singers like Doris Day and Tony Bennett and clips from the Crosby-Hope-Lamour "Road to . . ." movies) to convince us that Burke matters. Alvaleta Guess's rich, room-filling voice, Eugene Fleming's astonishing dancing, Michael McGrath's charm, and Gary Guzio's sweet, punchy trumpeting are the standouts in a near-perfect cast and band, and with their help the songs speak for themselves. Written and directed by Michael Leeds; the brilliant choreography is by Kathleen Marshall. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Tempest—The New York Shakespeare Festival's Central Park production, starring Patrick Stewart and directed by George C. Wolfe, has moved indoors. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Victor/Victoria—Julie Andrews has returned to Broadway to star in a theatrical version of the 1982 movie. Written and directed by Blake Edwards. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Zombies from the Beyond—A musical sendup of the science-fiction movies of the fifties. (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 254-5076.)

LONG RUNS

AFTER-PLAY: Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200. . . . **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **DEATH DEFYING ACTS:** Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **GREASE!:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **HAVING OUR SAY:** Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE HEIRESS:** Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200. . . . **HOW TO SUCCEED IN BUSINESS WITHOUT REALLY TRYING:** Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PARTY:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **ROB BECKER'S DEFENDING THE CAVEMAN:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100. . . . **SHOW BOAT:** Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **SUNSET BOULEVARD:** Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007. . . . **SWINGTIME CANTEEN:** Blue Angel, 321 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **SYLVIA:** John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200.

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DANCE

Toronto Dance Theatre—The company appears in five works by choreographer Christopher House. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Nov. 8-10 at 8, Nov. 11 at 2 and 8, and Nov. 12 at 2 and 7:30.)

"Snow on the Mesa"—The Martha Graham Dance Company performs an hour-long work choreographed by Robert Wilson and based on Graham's life. Donna Karan designed the costumes. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Nov. 9 at 7:30, Nov. 10 at 8, Nov. 11 at 2 and 8, and Nov. 12 at 3.)

New York Baroque Dance Company—Choreographer Alan Tjaarda Jones, a seventeenth-century-dance historian, directs the company in "Les Arts Florissants," an *idylle en musique* by Marc-Antoine Charpentier, performed by the period-instrument orchestra Concert Royal, and staged with swordplay, banner dances, and actors *en travesti*. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. Nov. 10 at 8.)

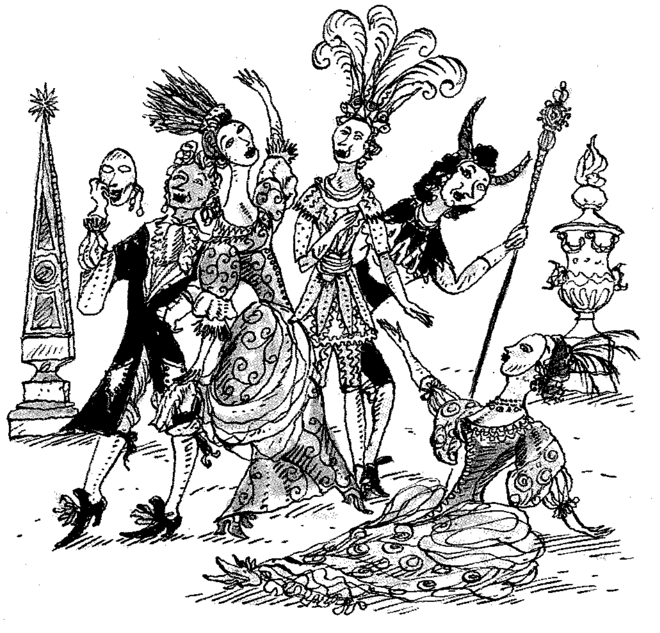
"Principia"—The Montreal-based company Les Grands Ballets Canadiens presents a full-length work for four couples, choreographed by Kevin O'Day. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Nov. 9 at 8.)

"Daughters from the Stars: Nis Bundor"—Members of the Spiderwoman Theatre, a Native American ensemble, retell their dreams in a narrative dance form they call "story-weaving." (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 691-6500. Nov. 9-11 at 8 and Nov. 12 at 3.)

"XXX"—Namaste Danse performs choreography by company founders Gayle Gibbons and Evelyn Palleja. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 924-0077. Nov. 8-11 at 8 and Nov. 12 at 3.)

"Dirty Wings"—Dancer-choreographer Sarah East Johnson creates works in which she uses skills she mastered as a performer in Circus Amok: in "Falling Stories" she balances an axe on her chin during a striptease; "Crash and Burn" and "Flying Squirrel" feature acrobatics and stilt walking, respectively; and in the title piece, four women climb up and tumble down human pyramids. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Nov. 9-12 at 9.)

Halau o Kekuhi—The Hawaiian hula ensemble, led by Nalani and Pualani Kanaka'ole, performs *mele*, in which hula dancers embellish traditional chants with dancing and pantomime. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Nov. 11 at 8.)



Baroque dance, at Florence Gould Hall.

EMMANUEL PIERRE

NIGHT LIFE

Wicked Goods

Chris Isaak, the dreamboat singer with the Elvis-meets-Ricky Nelson looks, comes wrapped in such a perfect package that it's hard to believe he's a solid rocker, too. His retro influences (the King, Orbison, surf rock, Hawaiian pop), his affection for tacky accoutrements (tiki lamps, flashy suits), and a stream of sexy videos and publicity pinups further encourage the notion that he's a lightweight. But after ten years and five albums, Isaak has proven that a glossy, mannered style isn't incompatible with wonderful songwriting and soulful performances.

At first listen, his latest album, "Forever Blue," may seem like just another collection of wistful ballads and rockabilly ravers. (And besides, it's missing the guitarist James Wilsey, who did such brilliant work on the singer's first three albums and on his big hit, "Wicked Game.") But Isaak's tenor crooning and falsetto sobs just keep getting better, and his studio arrangements remain sophisticated and surprising. After a long absence from New York, he'll be at the Beacon Theatre on November 9. How can anything that looks that good be good for you, too?

CONCERTS

Engelbert Humperdinck—The British saxophonist turned bedroom balladeer hits town on his Harley-Davidson, and not a minute too soon—he looks pretty damn buff after more than thirty years in the business, but he's no Tom Jones. On this tour he'll once again be entertaining a disproportionate number of female fans, with songs from his familiar repertoire ("Release Me," "After the Lovin'") as well as selections from "Love Unchained," his recording of hits by such biggies as Elvis and Nat King Cole. (Westbury Music Fair. 1-516 334-0800. Nov. 8-9 at 8.)

Joan Armatrading—On her latest album, "What's Inside," Saint Joan has done away with most of the simple reggae of her seventies alternative-radio classics, caught a disturbing case of the falsettos, and taken up with the Kronos Quartet. But fans shouldn't be put off by such slickness. When Armatrading sings her achingly openhearted love songs, she sounds as dedicated as ever to soulful pining in her lower register. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Nov. 8 at 8.)

Big Audio Dynamite—Back when the lads in Green Day (see below) were still drooling and sucking on their pacifiers, there was a very fine band called the Clash, who were among the first of the so-called punks to transcend remedial technique with ace songwriting and in-your-face attitude. After the band's co-leaders, Joe Strummer and Mick Jones, parted ways, Jones surprised the world with his follow-up project, a dub- and hip-hop-driven interracial combo called Big Audio Dynamite. That was ten years ago, and since then the band has released a handful of likable, if undistinguished, hits. Last summer, Jones and company returned with their best single ever, which featured the following autobiographical revelation: "I didn't like jazz / I didn't like funk / I turned out a punk." Oh, *that's* what happened. With Lotion. (Academy, 234 W. 43rd St. 307-7171. Nov. 8 at 8.)

Statesmen of Jazz—Old soldiers fade away, but jazzmen burn bright till it's time to go. The attendees—Doc Cheatham, Benny Waters, Al Grey—are impervious to nostalgia and sentimentality: they live to play and play to live. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. Nov. 9 at 8.)

Chris Isaak—With the Wallflowers. (Beacon Theatre. Nov. 9 at 8.)

Victoria Williams—Even those who have trouble with this Louisiana-bred folksinger's voice—a high, mildly cloying Kewpie-doll instrument—have been charmed by her uncanny songwriting. She's touring in support of her new live album, a splendid collection titled "This Moment in Toronto." (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 1-718 858-2424. Nov. 10 at 8.)

Emmylou Harris with the Daniel Lanois Band—"I've always tried to take chances," the Queen of Country told us a few weeks ago, but nothing could have prepared anyone for the chance she took by hiring Daniel Lanois, the Canadian producer best known for his work with Peter Gabriel and Robbie Robertson, to help make her new record. Obviously she knew what she was doing. "Wrecking Ball" is a stunner—a Rothko-esque wash that her voice cuts through like a floodlight. Anyone who thinks of country music as all cowboys and spurs should give it a listen. Lanois is no slouch, either; his excellent "For the Beauty of Wynona" (1994) was packed with thoughtful songs and eccentric grooves. A big show. (Beacon Theatre. Nov. 10 at 8.)

Susana Baca—A standout from the David Byrne-assembled album "Afro-Peruvian Classics: The Soul of Black Peru," this Lima native brings a sumptuous Spanish, Andean, and African mix to her sensual music. (St. Ann's Church. Nov. 11 at 8.)

David Sylvian—As the leader of the art-pop band Japan in the early eighties, Sylvian wrote groovy songs like "Still Life in Mobile Homes" and "Gentlemen Take Polaroids," and with his black eyeliner, bottle-blond locks, and formidable cheekbones, he was considered the best-looking man in England. Recently he's become something of a churl, turning out indulgent, ambient folk from his base in Minneapolis. He used to surround himself with first-rate musicians; now he appears solo, with nothing but an acoustic guitar and a piano—a dangerous idea for a man whose I-just-watched-a-dozen-Bergman-films delivery is an acquired taste. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Nov. 11 at 8.)

Dick Hyman—A florid pianist with the American popular songbook (pre-rock and roll, that is) at his fingertips interprets the music of Ellington and Strayhorn. (Saint Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-2200. Nov. 12 at 8.)

Green Day—The band's début album sold a mind-boggling eight million copies, and now the rambunctious Berkeley trio is back. "Insomniac," its long-awaited (at least by the band's accountants) follow-up, is currently the No. 2 record in the land (even as its predecessor, "Dookie," remains lodged in the top one hundred). There's still not much here in the way of ideas (most of the lyrics

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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are angst-ridden tripe on the order of "I found out what it takes to be a man / but Mom and Dad will never understand . . ."). But live the band has a neat cartoonish intensity and a terrific flair for mayhem. During a mud fight they encouraged at the 1994 Woodstock festival, drummer Tré Cool lost a tooth; he claims that he liked it. With the Riverdales. (Nassau Coliseum. 1-516 794-9300. Nov. 12 at 8.)

THOKOZA / THE FAMOUS BIBLETTES—The South African vocal ensemble and the gospel combo from Eutawville, South Carolina. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Nov. 12 at 8.)

JETHRO TULL—Ian Anderson, the genteel salmon farmer who doubles as a bug-eyed, flute-wielding troll, has been mistakenly called Jethro Tull for years. That's a band, not a guy. Last year, Anderson parted with his old group and released "Divinities: Twelve Dances with God," a disk of music for flute and orchestra, which was not without a certain piquant dignity (especially for a man who used to parade about in leggings). Now he intends to return to the world of baroque rock—a genre that Tull has perfected since 1969. (Beacon Theatre. Nov. 14 at 8.)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Vocalist **ANDREA MARCOVICCI** is currently in the midst of an extended run. On Nov. 13, vocalist Christopher Gines, who sounds like a young Vic Damone, performs music from his recent recording with the superb composer Charles Deforest, who offers piano accompaniment. Dining.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Nov. 12: a double bill featuring the **JOHN SCOFIELD** quartet and the **GATEWAY TRIO.** Scofield knows how to write a great melody (and how to assemble a band). He favors tricky, asymmetrical guitar lines over generic flash; where his peers tend to be marathon runners, he's an ambler. The key to his appeal is simple: within this cultivated guitarist beats the heart of a twisted bluesman. The Gateway Trio unites three exemplary players—guitarist John Abercrombie, drummer Jack DeJohnette, and bassist Dave Holland—and leans toward a chamber-jazz sensibility. **HERBIE HANCOCK** takes over on Nov. 14. What with his hip-hop, funk, pop, and world-music endeavors, it's easy to forget that Hancock is also one of the most influential jazz pianists alive. In order to remind us, he's taking his steaming acoustic trio out for a spin. With the extraordinary bassist Dave Holland (busy week, huh, Dave?) and the bright young drummer Gene Jackson. Dining.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—Through Nov. 11: like the guitar, the vibraphone too often brings out the showoff in a jazz musician; happily, the once prolix **STEVE NELSON** is learning to hold back, replacing bluster with structure and flash with lyricism. Starting Nov. 13: a trio featuring Peter Leitch, John Hicks, and David Williams. Dining.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and, through New Year's Eve, the great **BOBBY SHORT.** . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** is in attendance.

IRIDIUM, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through Nov. 12: the **ABBEY LINCOLN** quartet. Celebrating the joys of a midlife resurgence, she of the gutsy survivor spirit and the indeterminate pitch struts a stage with such force that it seems as if she'll be around forever. The **KENNY GARRETT** band and the **TERENCE BLANCHARD** quartet begin a three-night run on Nov. 14. Garrett's high-visibility slot in Miles Davis's late-eighties bands didn't reveal the half of what he can do with a horn. Schooled in two leading swing academies—the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra and Freddie Hubbard's band—he now soars in the modal-bop stratosphere. Time has added heft to his tone and intellect to his improvisation; his "Triology" was one of the smartest recordings this year. As Spike Lee's Bernard Hermann, Blanchard has turned in some vibrant and atmospheric scores (his latest is "Clockers"), but his capabilities as a soloist aren't in danger of being overlooked—he's the best of the neo-Marsalis trumpeters, a thrilling virtuoso with a romantic streak. Dining.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Nov. 8-11: Guitar and bass with **GENE BERTONCINI** and **DAVID FINCK.** It seems that only beautiful sounds emanate from Bertoncini's guitar. The overlooked bassist Finck makes for a fine cohort.

RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—The great cabaret in the sky. Through Nov. 12: vocalist **AMANDA MC BROOM** is the star in residence. The redoubtable **RUTH BROWN** takes over on Nov. 14. Closed Mondays.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through Nov. 12: the **SONNY FORTUNE** quartet. Dining.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—There's a beauty to the best work of tenor saxophonist **JAVON JACKSON** (through Nov. 12): he has a hard, inviting sound and the agility of an acrobat, and his skills seem to be growing by the month. **MARK WHITFIELD** takes charge on Nov. 14. A young guitarist with chops to spare and a bit too much desire to prove it, he has the funky fluidity of a pre-pop George Benson and a flair for gospel and blues. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

VISIONES, 125 Macdougal St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—A tiny, low-key supper club where the jazz, like the Spanish-American cuisine, can take on a spicy, multicultural flavor.

ZINC BAR, 90 W. Houston St. (477-8337)—Wednesdays in November belong to **RAVI COLTRANE.** Sundays feature Brazilian jazz.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Through Nov. 11: piano and bass with Lynne Arriale and Michael Moore. Dining.

ROCK, ETC.

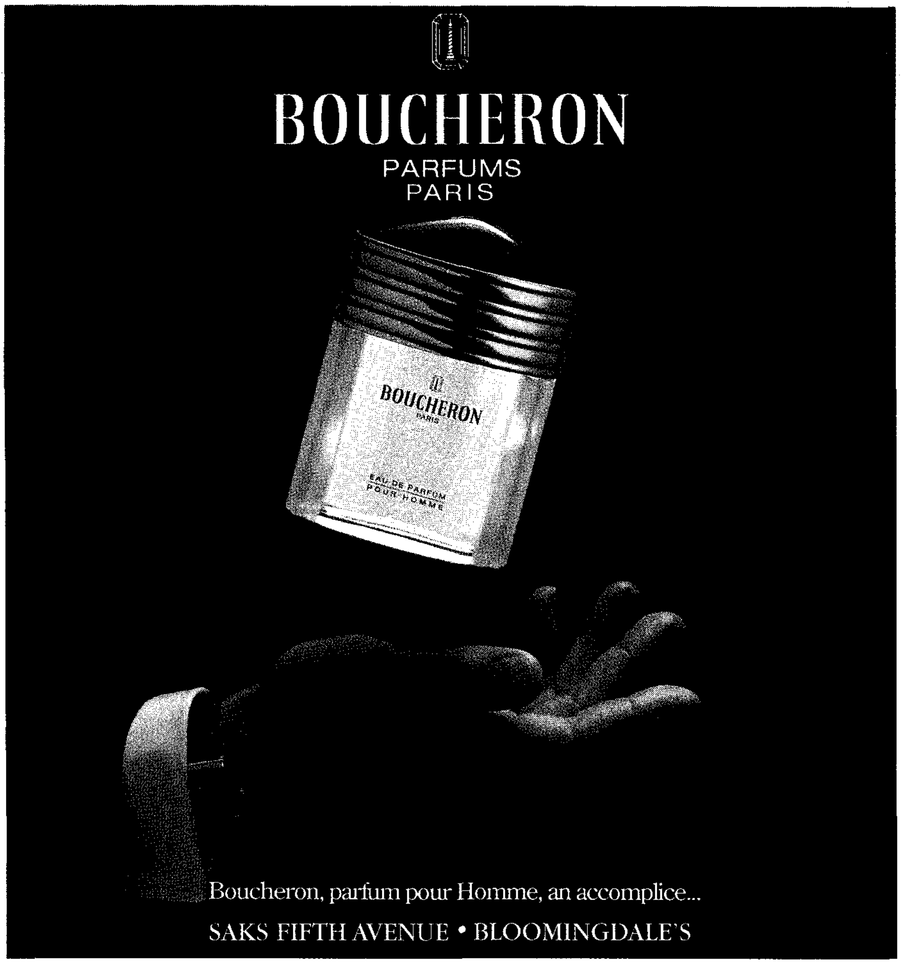
BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Nov. 8: Acoustic survivor **DAN HICKS,** whose cynicism, after all this time, still doesn't outweigh his lyricism. Nov. 9-10: Duelling guitar heroes **ROBBEN FORD** and **SONNY LANDRETH.** Nov. 13: Former Springsteen sideman **NILS LOFGREN.** Dining.

BROWNIES, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—Nov. 10: The chirpy rock of the **VERY PLEASANT NEIGHBOR.** Nov. 11: Garage rock with the **FLESHTONES.**

CHICAGO B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Nov. 10-11: From Harlem via Paris, harmonica master **SUGAR BLUE.**

DON HILL'S, 511 Greenwich St. (219-2850)—A tidy little SoHo bar with an above-average P.A. system and topnotch local bands on the docket. . . . ¶ Friday night is SqueezeBox, a drag queen-ridden, glam-rock romp hosted by Mistress Formika which has become New York's sexiest little party. Go-go girls and boys pole dance on the overcrowded bar; the guest performers are always fun, often sleazy, and, sometimes, surprisingly good—Sherry Vine, Debbie Harry, and members of Hole have all graced the stage. Show up late (and horny) in your best metallic blue eyeshadow.

FEZ, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Nov. 10: **MIKE PETERS,** formerly of the Alarm, plays unplugged. Nov. 11: Stratotanker. Nov. 14: Actress, musician, comedienne, and performance artist **ANN MAGNUSON** begins a two-


BOUCHERON
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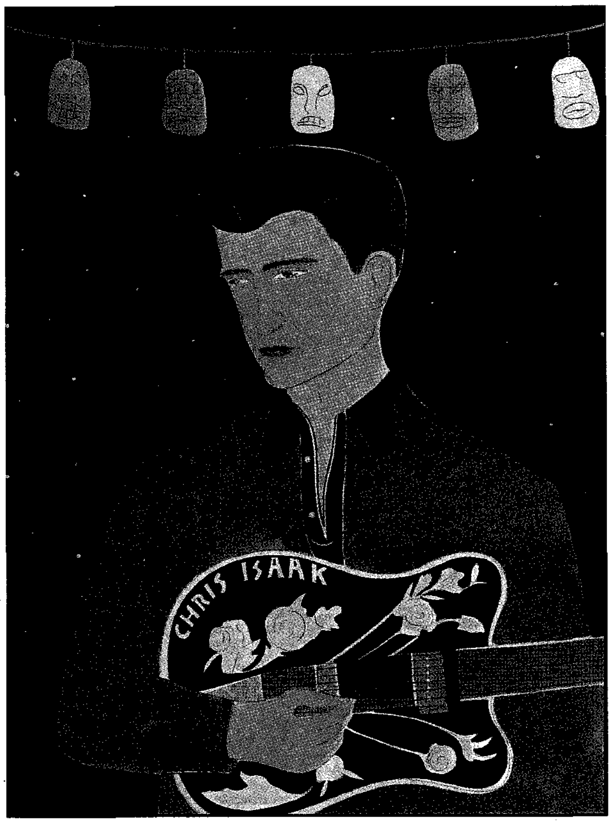
SAKS FIFTH AVENUE • BLOOMINGDALE'S



Chris Isaak, at the Beacon Theatre.

GEOFFREY PARKER

night stand. . . . ¶ The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

IRVING PLAZA, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Nov. 9: **SHANE MAC GOWAN.** With his boozy balladeering and sparse dentition, MacGowan made his old band, the Pogues, the idols of college kids who had romantic notions about factory jobs in dirty old towns like Dublin and Liverpool. Nov. 10: Rap with **SHAGGY.** Nov. 13: **GARBAGE.** Far more than just another band with three Midwestern guys and a Scottish female singer. Their secret weapon is the celebrated producer Butch Vig, the man behind the knobs on Nirvana's "Nevermind" and Smashing Pumpkins' "Siamese Dream." The band's eponymous dêbut is an eyebrow-raising blend of electronic textures and slashing guitars. **SUPERCHUNK,** who blow in on Nov. 14, have been pumping out tuneful (if occasionally bland) alternative rock forever—their fans have graduated from some of our most prestigious institutions of higher learning. The band's restless creativity has even spawned a spinoff in the wholly likeable Portastatic.

KNITTING FACTORY, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Nov. 10-11: **LUNA.** Led by Harvard grad Dean Wareham, the man who drove Galaxie 500 to college-rock greatness, this New York quartet has become adept at a dreamy kind of music that's so unabashedly derivative it's disposable *and* eternal. The touchstone here is the ever-present influence of the Velvet Underground (the late Sterling Morrison appeared on the band's last record, "Bewitched," to add a touch of authenticity). Luna's new effort, "Penthouse," features a guest appearance by ex-Television guitarist Tom Verlaine. Nov. 14: **ERIC BOGOSIAN** presents a work in progress called "Wake Up and Smell the Coffee."

LIMELIGHT, Sixth Ave. at 20th St. (807-7850)—Nov. 14: **MY LIFE WITH THE THRILL KILL CULT,** a crazy gothic combo whose kitschy party music owes a lot to the B-52s and the Cramps.

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (1-201 798-4064)—Nov. 9: Up-and-coming rockers **44.** Nov. 10: **KING MISSILE.** Nov. 12: **MIKE PETERS** (see Fez); with **HANK.**

MERCURY LOUNGE, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Nov. 10: The **BOTTLE ROCKETS.** This hirsute combo from Festus, Missouri, has scored major coolness points with its recent release, "The Brooklyn Side," produced by former Blackheart and Del Lord Eric Ambel. The LP offers ample proof that the band has mastered the Sturm und Twang of deep-fried rock and roll. With Cindy Lee Berryhill. Nov. 11: **JOY ASKEW,** whose fine voice and keyboard work have landed her gigs with Peter Gabriel and Joe Jackson. With local folkster **PIERCE TURNER.**

S.O.B.'S, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—Bossa-nova queen **ASTRUD GILBERTO** begins a three-night engagement on Nov. 14. Dining.

SUPPER CLUB, 240 W. 47th St. (921-1940)—**BEN HARPER** (Nov. 8) plays stark, bass-heavy acoustic blues, and his slide work is reminiscent of the fiery Chess masters, but his sophomore album, "Fight for Your Mind," is firmly set in 1995. So if his soul is somewhat more soothing than inspiring, put it down to youthful discretion—the kid's got talent, class, and a nice set of pipes. Give him a break.

TRAMPS, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Nov. 8: **BIG STAR.** Like the Velvet Underground and the Stooges, Big Star always inspired people to start a band. But no group has ever sounded anything quite like the short-lived early-seventies Memphis quartet, which released two records to huge acclaim and no sales, a foolproof formula for cult status. Fronted by Alex Chilton—the guy who sang "The Letter" with the Box Tops at age sixteen—and hometown pal Chris Bell, Big Star created seductive guitar pop that hummed with contradictions: sophisticated yet naïve, structured yet shambling, optimistic yet melancholy, Brit-obsessed yet thoroughly American. A couple of years ago, Chilton reassembled the band, with members of the Posies stepping in for the late Bell and original bassist Andy Hummell. The upshot was a live reunion record in which the singer, in older, plainer voice, infused his youthful material with a kind of achy sarcasm. Expect more of the same, with an audience very eager to be pleased. Also appearing are the **MEAT PUPPETS,** who over the past fifteen years have evolved from an independent country-punk trio into a major-label alternative-rock band. Their 1993 "Too High to Die" earned a gold record, but the group received wider recognition when Kurt Cobain acknowledged them as a primary inspiration. Their new "No Joke!" is stronger than their previous efforts—which is saying a lot. It recalls the dry, sweet spirit of the Puppets' early records: country roots, blues-metal crunch, and wistful harmonies. Nov. 10-11: **LARRY GRAHAM AND GRAHAM CENTRAL STATION.** In the galaxy of funk, Graham is a major star. Back in the seventies (with able assistance from Herschel Happiness on clavinet, David Dynamite on guitar, and Chocolate on "funk box") he devised the popping bass line, the secret fuel that powers all the major grooves; in bacchanalia like "Release Yourself," the band practically invented the heart attack.

From the horse's mouth

A COMPLETELY UNSOLICITED testimonial appeared recently in A La Carte, the definitive mouthpiece of food and wine.

It was penned by Raymond Gardner and it concerned *"...the superbly mellow Macallan from Craigellachie in Banffshire, aged in sherry casks, a mellow miracle and to my mind the most sophisticated of the commonly-available Highland malts..."*

If that is what the pundits think, perhaps it is time to let your own mouthpiece pronounce on the subject.

The Macallan
12

THE MACALLAN.
THE SINGLE MALT
SCOTCH.

Sole U.S.A. Distributor, Remy Amerique, Inc., NY, NY Scotch Whisky 86 Proof, 43% Alc./Vol. © 1995

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Rembrandt/Not Rembrandt." (Reviewed this week in The Art World.) Through Jan. 7. . . . ¶ "Howard Hodgkin: Paintings 1975-1995," a survey of the British abstract colorist's career. Through Jan. 28. . . . ¶ "John Singleton Copley in America," seventy-five portraits of affluent Bostonians and New Yorkers, done before the artist packed up for London in 1775. Through Jan. 7. . . . ¶ "Goya in the Metropolitan Museum of Art." Through Dec. 31. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Piet Mondrian: 1872-1944," a hundred and sixty paintings and drawings, and a re-creation of the artist's last studio, at 15 E. 59th St. Through Jan. 23. . . . ¶ "Alfred Stieglitz at Lake George," a large trove of photographs from the twenties and thirties, many never before exhibited, taken at Stieglitz's upstate retreat. Through Jan. 2. . . . ¶ Uta Barth, Joseph Bartscherer, Ulrich Görlich, and Eric Rondepierre have contributed new photographs and site-specific installations to "New Photography 11." Through Jan. 9. . . . ¶ Carrie Mae Weems's installation for the "Projects" series combines photographs, texts, wallpaper, and decorative objects. Through Jan. 2. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

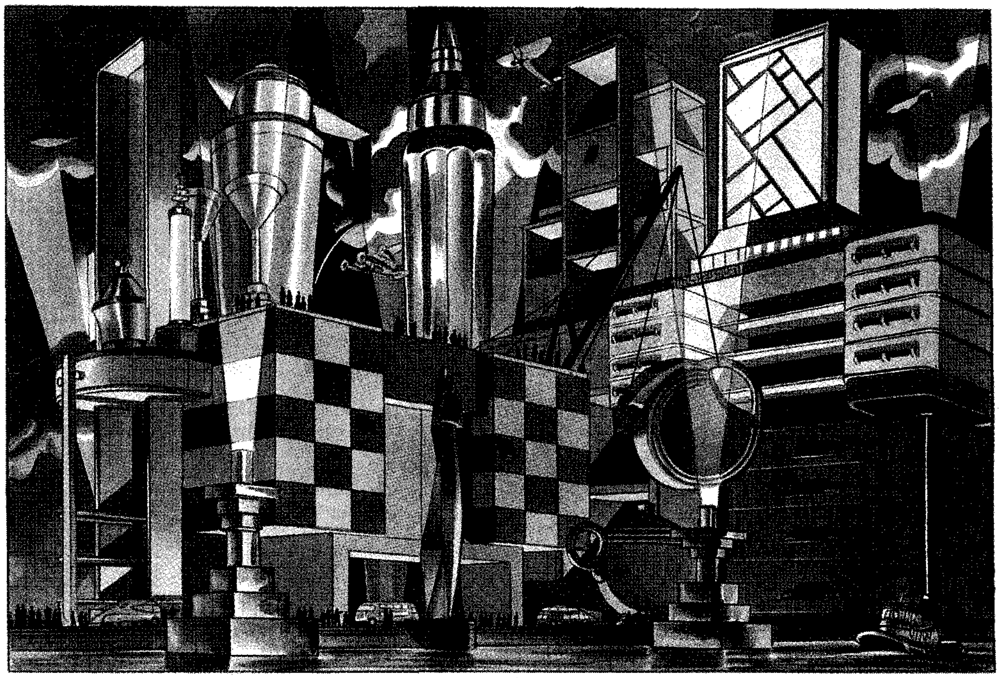
Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Claes Oldenburg: An Anthology" features more than two hundred of the Popster's hard and soft sculptures, collages, and drawings for existing large-scale projects and proposed colossal monuments. Through Jan. 21. . . . ¶ "Joel-Peter Witkin," a mid-career retrospective of the photographer's astonishing and horrifying œuvre. Through Jan. 14. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway—Fluorescent-light sculptures from 1963 to 1987 by Dan Flavin. Through Nov. 30. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—Shifting cultural paradigms, man. "Beat Culture and the New America: 1950-1965" chronicles the works, and cross-pollinations, of the poets, painters, musicians, photographers, and filmmakers who took their aesthetics from the street. Among the cats on view are Rivers, Corso, Ginsberg, Kaprow, Kerouac, Conner, DeFeo, and Berman. Starts Nov. 9. . . . ¶ "Altered and Irrational" features works incorporating nontraditional elements and processes, like Fred Tomaselli's "Ocotillo Nocturne" (made of resin, pills, and hemp leaves) and Robert Therrien's "No Title" (an everyday thermometer). (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"To the Ends of the Earth" includes fossils, field equipment, maps, and memorabilia from fifteen of the museum's fossil-hunting expeditions—from Medicine Bow, Wyoming, in 1901, to the current Gobi Desert digs. Through Dec. 10. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—"Craft in the Machine Age, 1920-1945," a host of objects—furniture, textiles, vases, turned bowls, cocktail shakers, crystal—whose creation was influenced by modernist aspects of Scandinavian, French, and Bauhaus design, among others. Through Feb. 25. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)



"Craft in the Machine Age, 1920-1945," at the American Craft Museum.

PHILIPPE GAUCKLER

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"Russian Jewish Artists in a Century of Change, 1890-1990," a large exhibition of paintings, sculptures, photographs, and graphic works by fifty artists, including Eric Bulatov, Léon Bakst, Marc Chagall, Ilya Kabakov, El Lissitzky, and Komar & Melamid. Through Jan. 28. (Open Sundays through Thursdays, 11 to 5:45, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Fantasy and Reality: Drawings from the Sunny Crawford von Bülow Collection." The forty-six pieces on view, from a small, tightly focussed collection, form a delightful sequence of little masterworks from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, mostly by French and Italian draftsmen. Through Jan. 7. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Edvard Munch and Harald Sohlberg: Landscapes of the Mind." A feast of paintings, drawings, and prints from the turn-of-the-century Norwegian masters. Through Jan. 14. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11:30 to 5:30; Friday evenings until 8, with no admission charge after 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Flights of Fancy," thirteen (of course) drawings by Charles Addams, most of which appeared in these pages. . . . ¶ Part two of "The Collecting Adventure, 1895-1995" examines the way the library has preserved rare sacred texts, original manuscripts of great literary value, and early printed books. Through Feb. 3. (Open Mondays, and Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Red Grooms—Several new "sculpto-pictoramas," the artist's moniker for his mixed-medium painted sculptures. You can stroll by such sites as Rockefeller Center, Saks, the Plaza, the Flatiron Building, and Canal Street; you can also walk *through* a life-size re-creation of a New York City bus, made of painted vinyl, nylon, rubber, aluminum, and more. Through Nov. 25. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

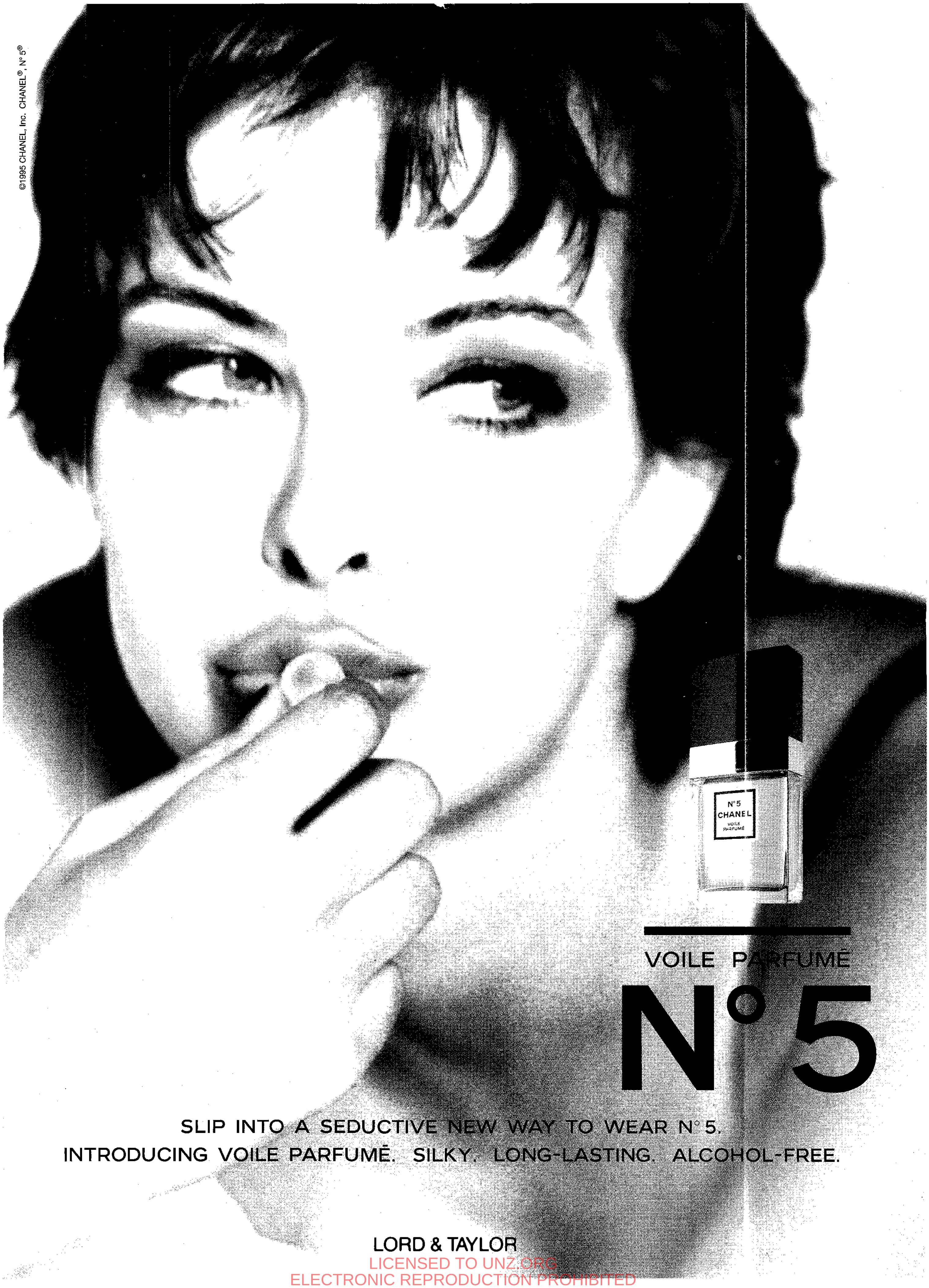
David Salle—"Tragedy, Comedy & Other New Paintings." Suburban-modernist décor, jaded sophisticates, butterflies, and snowflakes jostle one another busily in these large pictures. At once fastidious and disorderly, they are much livelier and funnier than the "Early Product Paintings" the artist showed here two years ago. Through Dec. 2. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

Philip Smith—Big oil-and-wax paintings on linen. Smith mixes graphic incisions, usually made with a screwdriver or some other metal tool, with abstract decorative elements—grids, stripes, and polka dots; a hermetic, personal symbolism, blending motifs from both Eastern and Western cultures, characterizes his iconography. Through Dec. 2. (McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Saul Steinberg—Drawings and "tables," from the forties through the eighties, by the *New Yorker* artist. The tables are relief assemblages incorporating the artist's tools: pencils, paint brushes, palettes, rubber stamps, etc., all mounted on wood. Through Dec. 9. (Baumgold, 128 E. 72nd St.)

"The View Inside"—A hit-or-miss collection of American and European paintings and graphics on the theme of interiors, with second-rate work by some big names (Matisse, Hassam, Hopper) and a few intriguing rarities. Three similar paintings by turn-of-the-century Danes each depict a bare room with a figure turned away from the viewer. You can almost see the girl shivering in Vilhelm Hammershøi's "Interior with Stove"—somehow you know that the stove hasn't been fired. A warmer note is struck in a pair of gaudy interiors by a mysterious naïve painter named just plain Baldini; no one knows who he was or where he came from. Through Nov. 18. (Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St.)

"Contacting Pablo Picasso"—A well-curated exhibition that explores one of the lesser-known frontiers of Picasso's influence: American printmaking. It began surprisingly early—an unmistakably Picassoid drypoint of a female figure, by Arthur Bowen Davies (1862-1928), dates from 1918. The show's title comes from a witty 1940 cartoon by Adolf Arthur Dehn (1895-1968), which shows Alfred Barr, the great director of MOMA, and a group of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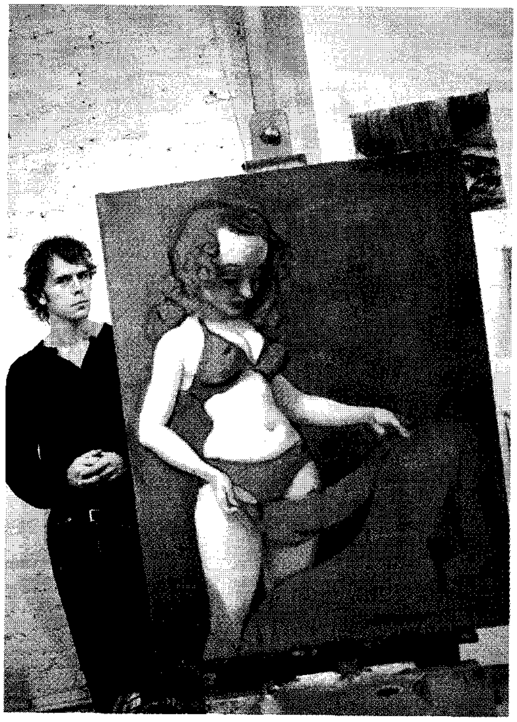
suit-clad collectors being devoured by a monstrous Picasso woman who has stepped out of the canvas. Through Nov. 18. (Spanish Institute, 684 Park Ave., at 68th St.)

Short List—**William Bailey,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. Through Dec. 2. . . . **Hannelore Baron,** Mathes, 41 E. 57th St. Through Dec. 29. . . . **Peter Halley,** Janis, 110 W. 57th St. Through Dec. 10. . . . **Annette Lemieux,** McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through Nov. 16. . . . **Christopher Lucas,** Baldacci, 41 E. 57th St. Through Nov. 11. . . . **Kazimir Malevich,** Hutton, 41 E. 57th St. Through Nov. 30. . . . **Robert Moskowitz,** Helman, 20 W. 57th St. Through Dec. 9. . . . **Yoko Ono,** Ubu, 16 E. 78th St. Through Dec. 13. . . . **Kenny Scharf,** Yoshii, 20 W. 57th St. Through Dec. 2. . . . **Tony Smith,** Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. Through Jan. 13.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

John Currin—Oils by a programmatically naughty young painter; the leitmotiv is the large breasts of saccharine blond nymphs. Call it Fragonard for the "Beavis and Butt-head" set. Currin's misogyny is too relentlessly arch to be called antifeminist, but just what he's getting at is rather hard to figure. Through Nov. 25. (Rosen, 130 Prince St.)



John Currin, at Rosen.

ALEXIS RODRIGUEZ-DUARTE

Jason Fox / Richard Rezac—"Red Paintings," a suite of lurid canvases on which semi-human bodies endure various gory agonies and ecstasies; the artist seems to enjoy blending imagery of orgasm and hemorrhage. The paintings are rendered in a graphic style apparently derived from horror and sci-fi comics, but they also allude, subtly, to certain prototypical modernist images (de Chirico's mannequins, Picasso's bullfights). / Smallish, rather inconspicuous sculptures variously made of bronze, steel, wood, and sassafras, some of them painted in dyspeptic, institutional-lavatory colors—so unassuming (and so derivative: Giacometti, Brancusi, Anthony Caro, and Joel Shapiro all flit by) that you might too quickly dismiss them as airport sculpture. But Rezac injects these seemingly humdrum forms with just enough unplaceable oddity to provoke a second, sustained look. Through Nov. 18. (Feature, 76 Greene St.)

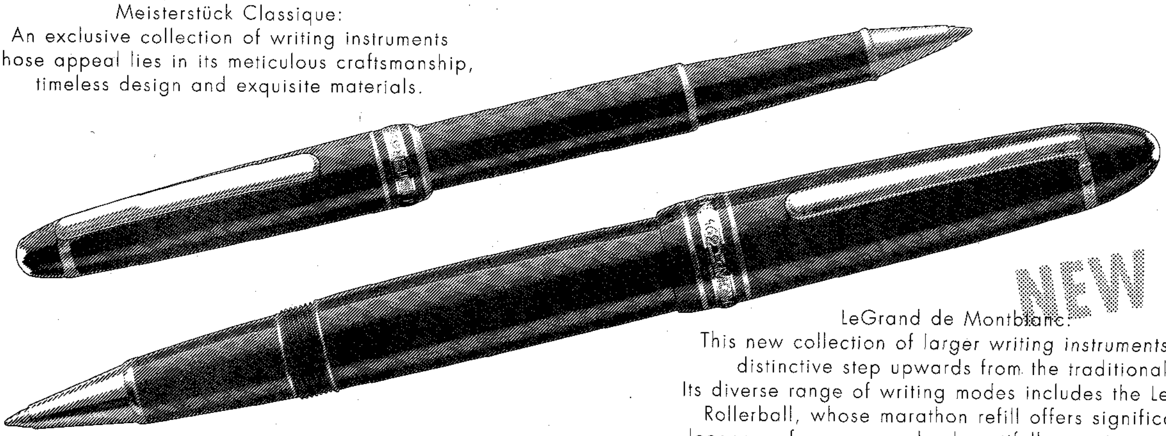
Al Hansen (1927–95)—More than fifty pieces, from the early sixties on, by the "happenings" pioneer and all-around enfant terrible, who died in June. Through Nov. 11. (Gracie Mansion Gallery, 54 St. Marks Pl. Open Thursdays through Saturdays, 2 to 6.)

Guillermo Kuitca—"Puro Teatro," paintings that depict theatre seating plans from the point of view of the stage. Through Dec. 22. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

Brice Marden—A large group of new paintings and drawings by a first-rank abstractionist; their effect in this museumlike space is quite impressive. Marden's lines, thicker and lusher than ever, swell and buckle in an amorphous space; whereas previously they kept clear of the edges, now they seem to cling to the perimeter as if seeking refuge from an unstructured picture plane. As fluidly graceful as these paintings are, they look somehow transitional—one eagerly awaits Marden's next step. Through Jan. 14. (Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

Richard Prince—Something different from the inspired subversive who in the past has appropriated magazine and advertising imagery (most famously the Marlboro Man) and given us paintings and drawings involving cartoons and one-liners. These new works feature dense brushwork, and the jokes have morphed into hand-painted lyrics. Through Dec. 22. (Gladstone, 99 Greene St.)

Gerhard Richter—A mini-retrospective of twenty-four photo-based paintings, from 1963 to 1987, by the German artist. Through Jan. 13. (Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince



"A man's mind, stretched by a new idea, can never go back to its original dimensions."

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.

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SAKS FIFTH AVENUE

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THE ART OF WRITING

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St. . . . ¶ Richter's comprehensive "Atlas" is at Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St. Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

"CODE"—A large convocation of the latest in digitally created art. "Osmose," Char Davies' virtual environment, induces contemplation rather than excitement. There are also several interactive pieces and some World Wide Web artwork. Through Dec. 2. (Ricco/Maresca, 152 Wooster St.)

SHORT LIST—**DONALD BAECHLER,** Kasmin, 74 Grand St. Through Nov. 25. . . . **RADCLIFFE BAILEY,** Beitzel, 102 Prince St. Through Nov. 11. . . . **DREW DOMINICK,** Freire, 580 Broadway. Through Nov. 11. . . . **ROBERT GUILLOT,** Shainman, 560 Broadway. Through Nov. 11. . . . **MARY HEILMANN,** Hearn, 530 W. 22nd St. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6; through Dec. 10. . . . **MIKE KELLEY,** Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St. Through Nov. 25. . . . **MEL KENDRICK** and **KIM JONES,** Weber, 142 Greene St. Through Nov. 18. . . . **KAREN KILIMNIK,** 303 Gallery, 89 Greene St. Through Dec. 22. . . . **ALEXANDER KU,** Merians, 76 Greene St. Through Dec. 2. . . . **JULIAN LETHBRIDGE,** Cooper, 155 Wooster St. Through Nov. 25. . . . **LYNN MC CARTY,** Hoffman, 429 West Broadway. Through Nov. 29. . . . **ANNE AND PATRICK POIRIER,** Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway. Through Nov. 11. . . . **HARVEY QUAYTMAN,** Room, 25 Thompson St. Through Nov. 11. . . . **SEAN SCULLY,** Boone, 417 West Broadway. Through Dec. 16. . . . **JAMES STIVENDER,** Klein, 40 Wooster St. Through Nov. 15.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S—Two heady days of Impressionist and modern art sales (Nov. 8-9) make this a very big week for the auction crowd. On Nov. 8 at 7, Renoir, van Gogh, Picasso, and other luminaries—many from the collection of the late Joseph H. Hazen—will be on the block, but the real excitement centers on a previously unknown 1917 self-portrait by Chagall. . . . ¶ On Nov. 10-11, œnophiles get their turn to bid on a spectrum of wines that includes a double magnum of Château Lafite 1865. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

CHRISTIE'S—An auction of Impressionist and modern paintings, drawings, and sculptures includes fourteen Rodins from the collection of Jules Mastbaum, who founded Philadelphia's Rodin Museum. (Park Ave. at 59th St. 546-1000. Nov. 8.)

STAMPS—Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries oversees the disposition of an unrivalled collection of Hawaiian postage stamps assembled over fifty years by newspaper magnate Thurston Twigg-Smith. (Park Avenue Tower, 65 E. 55th St. 753-6421. Nov. 8-11.)

PRINT FAIR 1995—Ninety-four exhibitors display their wares. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. Nov. 10-12. For information, call 759-4469.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

MERRY ALPERN—"Dirty Windows," a series of photos that the artist took from one window looking into another—the other being the bathroom window of an illegal financial-district sex club. Through Nov. 25. (Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St.)

DAVID BYRNE—Beautiful photographs of banal subjects—fluorescent lights, living-room chairs, airport signs—by an artist bent on finding life in the mundane. Through Nov. 22. (Cristinerose, 395 West Broadway.)

RALSTON CRAWFORD (1906-78)—Crawford was well known for his linear, near-abstract paintings of a narrow range of subjects: grain elevators, the Third Avenue El, lobster pots, and the seafaring life. He also took photographs throughout his career; vintage black-and-white images showing details of his usual subject matter are on view. Through Dec. 30. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St.)

BRUCE DAVIDSON—Sumptuous wide-angle black-and-white views of life and limbs in Central Park: lovers, loners, kids, birds, trees, and blizzards. Through Dec. 9. (Burden, 20 E. 23rd St.)

LEN JENSHEL and **DIANE COOK**—Surreal and sublime volcanic landscapes, from Craters of the Moon National Monument, in Idaho, to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. Through Nov. 25. (Richardson, 560 Broadway.)

O. WINSTON LINK—Black-and-white pictures of the last steam trains (along with depots and townsfolk) of the Norfolk and Western Railway, taken between 1955 and 1960. Through Dec. 16. (Mann, 42 E. 76th St. . . . ¶ Link's little-known color photographs of the same subjects are on view, for the first time, at Danziger, 130 Prince St., through Dec. 2.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.—"Feeling the Spirit: Searching the World for the People of Africa," twenty years of photographs by *Times* staff photographer Chester Higgins, Jr. Through Jan. 8. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY MIDTOWN, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—"The Garden of Earthly Delights: Photographs by Edward Weston and Robert Mapplethorpe." Still-lifes, nudes, and portraits, hung side by side in comparative groupings. Through Nov. 26. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

SHORT LIST—**ANSEL ADAMS,** Danziger, 130 Prince St. Through Dec. 2. . . . **CARLO MOLLINO,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. Through Nov. 25. . . . **JOHN O'REILLY,** Saul, 560 Broadway. Through Nov. 25. . . . **LORNA SIMPSON,** Sean Kelly, 43 Mercer St. Through Nov. 11. . . . **ARTHUR TRESS,** Bridgewater/Lustberg, 560 Broadway. Through Nov. 18. . . . **JERRY N. UELSMANN,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway. Through Dec. 9. . . . **WILLIAM WEGMAN** and **MARK KLETT,** Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. Through Nov. 18.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim Museum.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

(The box-office number for Alice Tully Hall is 875-5050; for Carnegie Hall, 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719.)

METROPOLITAN OPERA—**LA FILLE DU RÉGIMENT,** with June Anderson, Sarah Walker, Muriel Costa-Greenspon, Luciano Pavarotti, and Michel Trempont; conducted by Edoardo Müller. (Nov. 8 at 8 and Nov. 11 at 1:30.) . . . **DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE,** with Tina Kiberg, Sally Wolf, Gösta Winbergh, Mikael Melbye, and Robert Lloyd; Peter Schneider. (Nov. 9 at 8.) . . . **UN BALLO IN MASCHERA,** with Sharon Sweet, Elizabeth Norberg-Schulz, Dolora Zajick, Francisco Araiza, and Paolo Gavanelli; Mark Elder. (Nov. 10 and Nov. 14 at 8.) . . . **THE QUEEN OF SPADES,** by Tchaikovsky, with Karita Mattila, Birgitta Svendén, Leonie Rysanek, Ben Heppner, Peter Kazaras, Nikolai Putilin, and Dmitri Hvorostovsky; Valery Gergiev. (Nov. 11 at 8.) . . . **IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA,** with Jennifer Larmore, Ramon Vargas, Roberto Frontali, Claudio Desderi, and Robert Lloyd; Adam Fischer. (Nov. 13 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA—The final performance of **KINKAKUJI,** by Toshiro Mayuzumi. (Nov. 8 at 8.) . . . ¶ Opening performances of **CINDERELLA,** by Rodgers and Hammerstein, with Rebecca Baxter, Sally Ann Howes, Jean Stapleton, Jane Powell, Alix Korey, Jeanette Palmer, George Dvorsky, and George S. Irving; Rob Fisher conducts. (Nov. 9 and Nov. 14 at 6:30; Nov. 10 at 8; Nov. 11 at 1:30 and 8; and Nov. 12 at 1:30. Through Nov. 19.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—Lukas Foss—composer, conductor, pianist, and champion of new music—gets a well-deserved nod from the

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Philharmonic, which has performed sixteen of his works in the past fifty years. In these concerts, Kurt Masur conducts Foss's "Renaissance Concerto" (featuring flutist Jeanne Baxtresser) and "Song of Songs" (an orchestral song cycle, here spotlighting mezzo-soprano Florence Quivar). Also on the program are several pieces that provide a context for Foss: antiphonal works for brass ensemble (by Giovanni Gabrieli, Samuel Scheidt, and Monteverdi) and three songs by Purcell from the Restoration comedy "The Mock Marriage" (with Ms. Quivar). (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Nov. 9 and Nov. 11 at 8 and Nov. 10 at 2.) . . . **NOTE:** Mr. Foss will participate in a panel discussion at Lincoln Center's Walter Reade Theatre on Nov. 8 at 6:30, and will be interviewed by composer Tania León at Avery Fisher Hall on Nov. 9 at 7 and Nov. 10 at 1.

CHICAGO SYMPHONY—Daniel Barenboim conducts a pair of concerts at Carnegie Hall. Nov. 8 at 8: Bruckner's Symphony No. 8. . . . ¶ Nov. 9 at 8: A concert version of Strauss's "Elektra," with sopranos Deborah Polaski and Alessandra Marc, mezzo-soprano Ute Priew, tenor James King, and baritone Falk Struckmann.

AMERICAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA—Although the name of Max Bruch (1838-1920) is kept in circulation almost exclusively by his G-Minor Violin Concerto and his "Kol Nidrei" (for cello and orchestra), he wrote prolifically—and engagingly—in a variety of genres, including the secular oratorio. His "Odysseus" (composed in 1872 to a libretto taken directly from Homer) was a favorite of Brahms's, who conducted the work in his own farewell appearance as director of Vienna's Society of the Friends of Music. Leon Botstein, leading the orchestra, the Canticum Novum Festival Singers, and numerous soloists, rescues it from obscurity. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Nov. 10 at 8.)

BUDAPEST FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA—Ivan Fischer conducts an all-Bartók program that comprises the "Hungarian Sketches," Piano Concerto No. 1 (with Zoltán Kocsis), and a concert version of the opera "Bluebeard's Castle" (with mezzo-soprano Ildikó Komlósi and bass Kolos Kováts). (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 11 at 8.)

THE ORCHESTRA OF THEN AND NOW—A newly formed orchestra, conducted by Michael Willens, performs arias, ensembles, and instrumental movements from Bach cantatas on period instruments; with several vocal soloists. (Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. Nov. 12 at 11 A.M. For information about tickets, call 875-5050.)

SMITHSONIAN CHAMBER PLAYERS—Last season, these instrumentalists surprised New Yorkers with a period-instrument performance of Strauss's "Metamorphosen," which, though only fifty years old, shone with a transparency that could not have been achieved on modern steel-strung string instruments. Now they turn to Schoenberg's "Verklärte Nacht," Mahler's Adagietto from his Symphony No. 5, and Mahler's setting for string orchestra of Beethoven's F-Minor String Quartet (Op. 95). Kenneth Slowik conducts. (Merkin Concert Hall. Nov. 12 at 8.)

DALLAS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA—Andrew Litton conducts Korngold's Sinfonietta, Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 (with André Watts), and Ronald Caltabiano's "Preludes, Fanfares and Toccatas." (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 14 at 8.)

RECITALS

JULIANA OSINCHUK—The pianist performs a decidedly offbeat program: the Bach/Busoni D-Minor Chaconne, Liszt's "Funérailles," the solo-piano version of Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue," and Viktor Kosenko's "Two Poem Legends," as well as Craig Coray's "Silan Inua," John Luther Adams's "Five Yup'ik Dances," and Philip Munger's "Semichi Toccata." The last three composers hail from Alaska, where this Ukrainian-American pianist now resides. (Merkin Concert Hall. Nov. 8 at 8.)

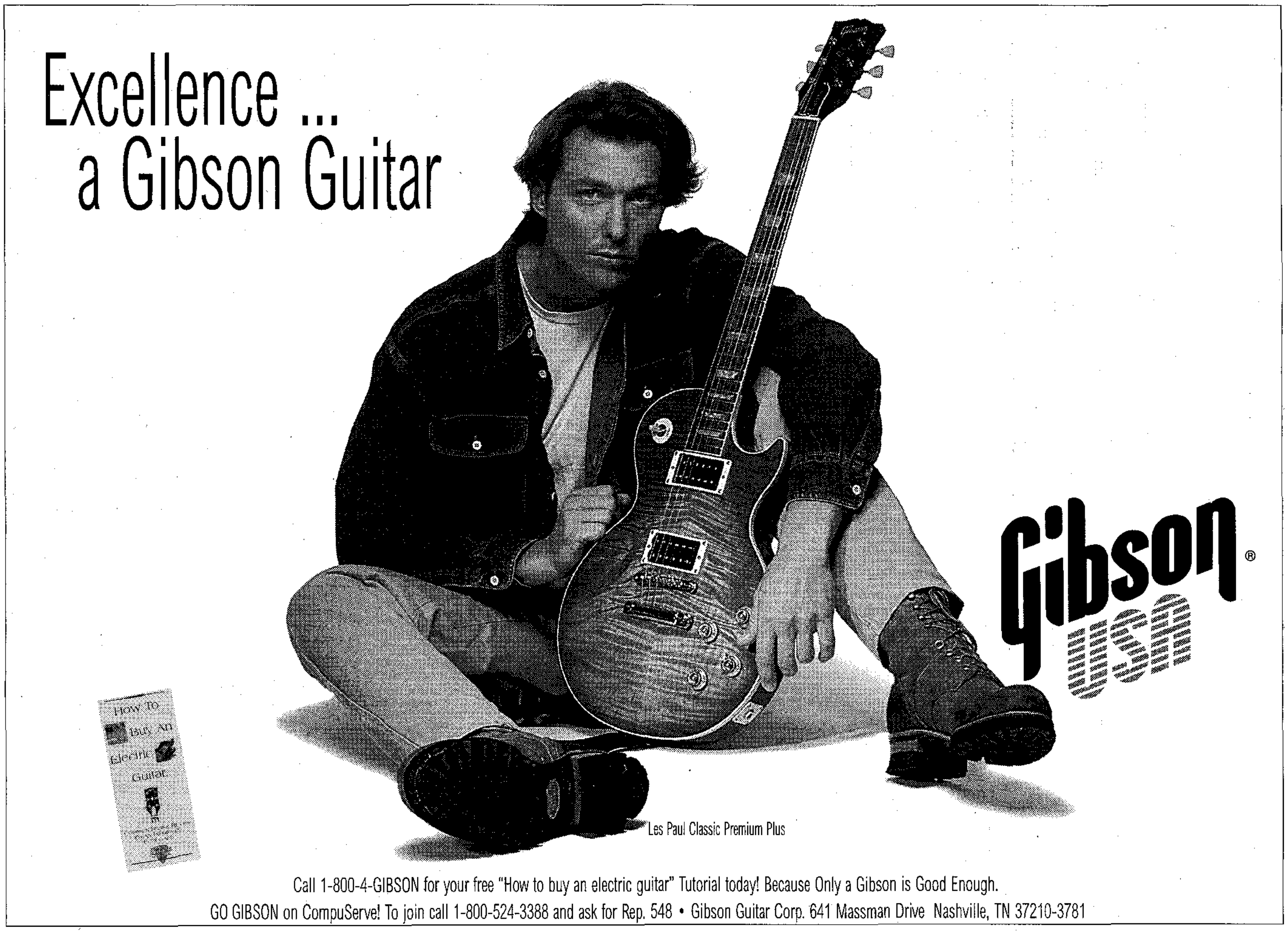
MITSUKO UCHIDA—The first two of three concerts in which the pianist links two Viennese composers separated by a century and a half: Schubert and Schoenberg. Nov. 8 at 8: Schubert's Sonatas in C Major (D. 840) and C Minor (D. 958) and Schoenberg's Three Pieces (Op. 11) and "Six Little Pieces" (Op. 19). . . . ¶ Nov. 12 at 2: Schubert's Sonatas in A Minor (D. 845) and A Major (D. 959), as well as Schoenberg's Five Pieces (Op. 23). (Alice Tully Hall.)

ENSEMBLE ORGANUM—Guillaume de Machaut's "Messe de Notre Dame" ranks as the Beethoven's Ninth of the fourteenth century. Marcel Pérès directs it as it might have sounded at the cathedral of Reims (where Machaut worked for many years), with plainchant propers for the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin interspersed among Machaut's polyphonic settings of the ordinary. (Church of the Blessed Sacrament, 152 W. 71st St. Nov. 9 at 8. For information about tickets, call 666-9266.)

HAESUN PAIK—Pianist, performing works by Messiaen, Rachmaninoff (his "Corelli Variations"), Ravel, Mozart, and Liszt. (Alice Tully Hall. Nov. 9 at 8.)

PAULA ROBISON AND FRIENDS—The flutist is joined by numerous colleagues in a concert that includes concertos by Telemann and Vivaldi. (Temple of Dendur, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Nov. 10-11 at 7.)

DROTTNINGHOLM BAROQUE ENSEMBLE—The period-instrument group, resident at the eighteenth-century jewel-box theatre of the Swedish court, plays chamber works by Biber, Johan Helmich Roman (a suite from his "Drottningholmsmusiken"), and Mozart. Dan Laurin is spotlighted in solo works for re-



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corder, including two concertos by Vivaldi. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Nov. 10 at 8.)

St. Petersburg String Quartet—The foursome performs quartets by Shostakovich (his Second) and Zurab Nadarejshvili, as well as Brahms's Piano Quintet (with Samuel Bartos). (Church of the Resurrection, 115 E. 74th St. Nov. 10 at 8. Admission by contribution.)

ARTEK—The period-instrument ensemble, led by keyboard player Gwendolyn Toth. Nov. 10 at 8: Five singers join ARTEK's continuo ensemble in madrigals, solos, and duets by Monteverdi and his contemporary Sigismondo d'India. . . . ¶ Nov. 11 at 8: ARTEK's full ensemble of eight singers plus Baroque orchestra perform sacred and secular works by Monteverdi (including selections from his "Selva Morale e Spirituale"), as well as early-Baroque instrumental music by Giovanni Gabrieli and Dario Castello. (St. Michael's Church, Amsterdam Ave. at 99th St. For information about tickets, call 873-0473.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Performing Beethoven's D-Major Serenade (Op. 8), Bartók's "Contrasts," and Brahms's A-Major Piano Quartet. (Alice Tully Hall. Nov. 10 at 8 and Nov. 12 at 5.)

"The Virtual Abbey"—David Hykes's Harmonic Choir and Harmonic Core will perform a selection of Hykes's New Age-ish chant-style works, with visual effects; their performance will be electronically transmitted to the Thoronet Abbey in southern France and instantaneously returned—enhanced by the abbey's acoustics—to the audience in New York. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Nov. 11 at 3 and 8 and Nov. 12 at 8.)

Ursula Oppens—The pianist offers music by Stravinsky (his 1924 Sonata and Four Études, Op. 7), Schubert (four impromptus and his C-Major Fantasy, D. 760), Tobias Picker, and Takemitsu. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Nov. 11 at 8.)

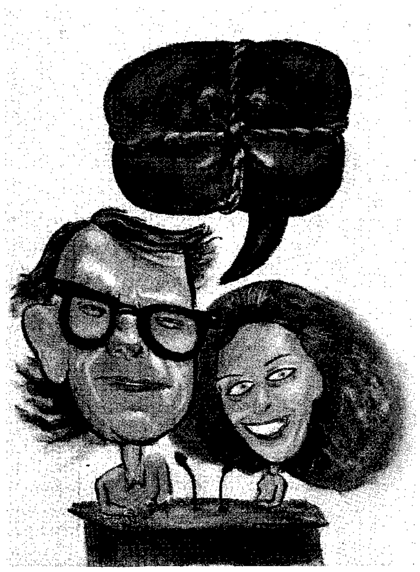
An Die Musik—Though his illustrations have appeared in a variety of magazines (from *Newsweek* to *MAD*), artist Nicky Zann may be best known for his strongly etched, caricaturelike covers of paperbacks—especially mysteries. The An Die Musik ensemble has commissioned Zann to create a series of "visualizations" of the life of Schubert, which will be displayed sequentially during a performance of John Harbison's "November 19, 1828"—itself a musical interpretation of Schubert's demise. Also on the program are works by Jerzy Sapieyevski, Mozart (his C-Major Flute Quartet, K. 285b, with the spotlighted role here performed on oboe), and Brahms (his C-Minor Piano Quartet). (Merkin Concert Hall. Nov. 12 at 4.)

Frederica von Stade—The mezzo-soprano offers songs by Scarlatti, Ravel, Granados, and Argento ("From the Diary of Virginia Woolf"); with pianist Martin Katz. (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 13 at 8.)

Kandinsky Piano Trio—The threesome plays trios by Haydn and Smetana, and is joined by storyteller Connie Regan-Blake for "Tales of Appalachia," by the All-Pro Cincinnati Bengals tackle turned composer (and two-time Grammy winner) Mike Reid. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Nov. 14 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

It's a Wrap—Christo and Jeanne-Claude discuss the twenty-four years of effort they devoted to planning, sketching, funding, rigging, bundling, roping, anchoring, monitoring, and photographing their recently completed project, "Wrapped Reichstag." The couple will also show preparatory drawings and photocollages of their work in progress "The Gates: Project for Central Park," a proposed installation, along the Park's twenty-seven miles of footpaths, of fourteen thousand fifteen-foot-tall gates hung with a sheer saffron fabric that would float in the fall breezes. (Rockefeller University, 1230 York Ave., at 66th St. Nov. 9 at 6:30. For more information, call the Architectural League of New York at 753-1722.)



Wrappers Christo and Jeanne-Claude.

AHMET GÖRGÜN

Open Court—The Virginia Slims Championship changed its name last year, but in one regard the smoke has returned to the W.T.A. Tour Championships: on Tuesday, Monica Seles brings her grunts and ground strokes back to the Garden. At a ceremony that night, the tournament will celebrate her return—which, by the way, is as merciless as ever. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6500. Nov. 13-14 at 5:30. The tournament continues through Nov. 19.)

Readings—Nov. 9 at 8: Joan Didion and John Gregory Dunne read from their work. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799.) . . . ¶ Nov. 10 at 7:30: Poets Robert Hass and Brenda Hillman read selections from their recent collections ("Human Wishes" and "Bright Existence," respectively) and other work. (Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.) . . . ¶ Nov. 13 at 8: Essayist, naturalist, and novelist Annie Dillard reads from her book of poems, "Mornings Like This." (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.) . . . ¶ Nov. 14 at 8: National Book Award finalists in fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, including Edwige Danticat, Stephen Dixon, Donald Justice, and Daniel C. Dennett, read from their nominated work. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 645-5848.)

Talks—Nov. 9 at 8:30 A.M.: Publisher Harold Evans hosts a breakfast chat about Truman Capote, with James Atlas, Helen Gurley Brown, and C. Z. Guest, among others. (mad.61, 10 E. 61st St. For reservations, call 940-7480.) . . . ¶ Nov. 9 at 8: Neshama Carlebach sings and tells stories about her father, the Hasidic singer and storyteller Shlomo Carlebach. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.) . . . ¶ Nov. 10 at 10 A.M.: In a master class on houseplants, horticulture writer Elvin McDonald will offer tips for bringing the garden indoors. (New York Botanical Garden, Bronx Park. 1-718 817-8747.) . . . ¶ Nov. 12 at 1: To commemorate Veterans Day fifty years after the end of the Second World War, historian Charles Kaiser makes the case that wartime military service was "the great, secret, unwitting engine of gay liberation in America." (New-York Historical Society, 2 W. 77th St., at Central Park W. 873-3400.)

Tour—Nov. 9 at 1: Photographer Bruce Davidson treks to the sites (of throngs, storms, statues, trysts by the boathouse, etc.) recorded in his latest exhibition and book, "Central Park." For more information, call Burden Gallery at 505-5555, ext. 325.

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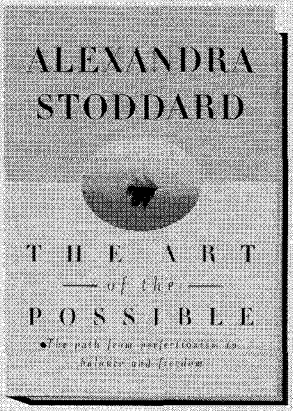

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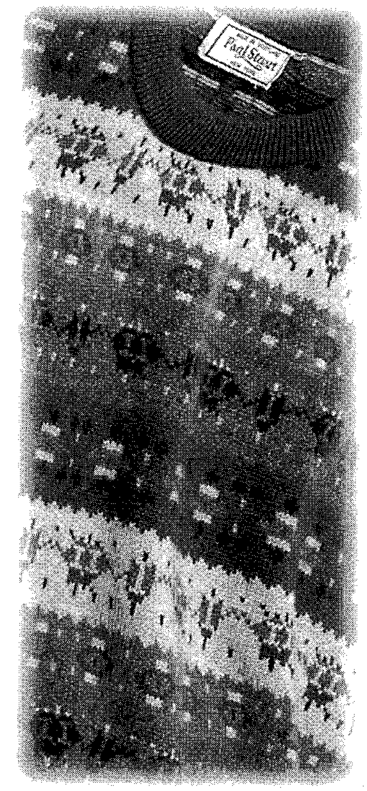

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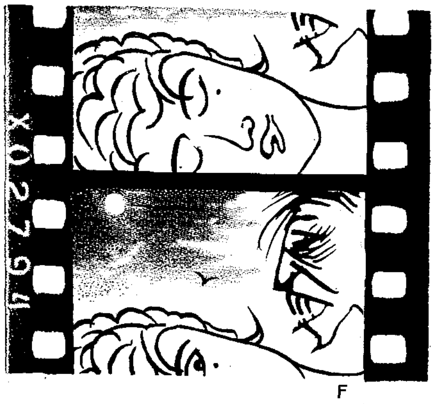
THE MOVIES



FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

ACE VENTURA: WHEN NATURE CALLS—Jim Carrey reprises his role as the Miami pet detective—this time on assignment in Africa—in a comedy written and directed by Steve Oedekerk. Opening November 10. (Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, Gemini, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center.)

CARRINGTON—A drama about the relationship between the painter Dora Carrington (Emma Thompson) and the writer Lytton Strachey (Jonathan Pryce) in England following the First World War. With Steven Waddington, Rufus Sewell, Samuel West, and Penelope Wilton. Written and directed by Christopher Hampton, from Michael Holroyd's 1968 biography of Strachey. Opening November 10. (Paris.)

THE JOURNEY OF AUGUST KING—In 1815, a young widower (Jason Patric) helps a runaway slave (Thandie Newton) escape through the mountains of North Carolina, in a drama directed by John Duigan. Adapted by John Ehle from his 1971 novel. Opening November 10. (68th St. Playhouse.)

CURRENT FILMS

(The signed notes are by Bruce Diones, Sarah Kerr, Anthony Lane, and Terrence Rafferty. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre information is listed on page 32.)

THE ADDICTION—Another black-and-white vampire film with a female bloodsucker (Lili Taylor—wasted, in more ways than one). The picture, directed by Abel Ferrara, wants to be a sombre thesis on the banality of evil, and brings in My Lai, Nazi atrocities, and junkie night life to illustrate its points. The dialogue, filled with academic buzzwords and solemn proclamations, is too staid and dreary to be laughable. The actors, including Annabella Sciorra and Christopher Walken, are posed beautifully for maximum noir effect, in lacy shadows and dark alleys, but the blood has been drained out of their performances.—B.D. (Angelika Film Center.)

ASSASSINS—What made Richard Donner's "Lethal Weapon" movies so enjoyable was the over-the-top hysteria of the action scenes. Here Donner goes for a more subdued, artistic pitch, and though the film is well crafted it's a rather drab thriller. Sylvester Stallone plays a hit man who wants to retire (he broods nicely), Antonio Banderas is his up-and-coming rival, and Julianne Moore is a surveillance expert who loves her cat and spies on her neighbors. The plot concerns a computer disk that she is selling, but it's just an excuse for everyone to pick up guns and start shooting. Banderas gives a cackling, exuberant performance; still, the glum, pensive mood never lifts.—B.D. (Orpheum VII and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Gemini; through Nov. 9.)

BLUE IN THE FACE—Wayne Wang and Paul Auster's loosely organized sketchbook of neighborhood life in Brooklyn—a collection of doodles in the margins of "Smoke" (which Auster wrote and Wang directed). One of the earlier film's stars, Harvey Keitel, and several of its supporting actors play improvised skits with a bunch of celebrity drop-ins, among them Michael J. Fox, Lily Tomlin, Jim Jarmusch, Roseanne, and Madonna. The pointlessness would be vastly more appealing if Wang and Auster didn't make such a point of it.—T.R. (10/23/95) (Angelika Film Center, Sutton, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

THE BROTHERS MCMULLEN—Perhaps this old-fashioned picture about three Irish-American brothers on Long Island and their fumbled dealings with women has struck a nerve because it's one of the rare romantic comedies aimed primarily at the fantasies of straight men. The movie was written and directed by the twenty-seven-year-old Edward Burns, who also co-stars as the cynical middle brother. His character gets a lot of mileage early on out of mean-spirited locker-room humor about his fear of commitment; his conversion to true love at the end is, by comparison, perfunctory and unconvincing.—S.K. (Village East Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

A BUSINESS AFFAIR—A romantic comedy in which an aspiring writer and floor model at Harrod's (Carole Bouquet) who is married to a celebrated novelist (Jonathan Pryce) falls in love with her husband's new publisher (Christopher Walken). Directed by Charlotte Brandstrom. (Quad Cinema.)

COPYCAT—A San Francisco police detective (Holly Hunter) turns to an agoraphobic criminal psychologist (Sigourney Weaver) for help in solving a string of murders, in a thriller directed by Jon Amiel. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Olympia, and Criterion Center.)

CRUMB—Terry Zwigoff's brilliant, scary documentary about the underground-comics artist R. Crumb. While the film is reviewing Crumb's career, from its psychedelic-era heyday to the present, and following him as he goes about his everyday activities, it's also telling a harrowing story about his damaged family. The movie is often funny, but what makes it extraordinary is that it explores, without presuming to explain, the sources of a unique and savage comic sensibility. And it shows us that Crumb's gift—the detachment that allows him to create such hilariously contemptuous images of the world around him (and inside him)—is also a kind of curse, or, at least, a nasty habit.—T.R. (5/1/95) (Film Forum; through Nov. 14.)

DEAD PRESIDENTS—Albert and Allen Hughes's new picture—about a young black man's journey from the Bronx to Vietnam and back again—is an ambitious misfire. In the early scenes, which introduce the main character (Larenz Tate) and his friends and family, the Hugheses find a natural humor and a soulful rhythm. Then the friends ship off to Vietnam, are hardened there, return to an America that offers them little opportunity, and turn to crime. The filmmakers pull off some bravura sequences (the armored-car robbery at the end is spectacular), and they know how to build a scene with a Scorsese-like sweep. Tate, Keith David, and Bokeem Woodbine put a great deal of heart into their performances, but because the characters are little more than types, the film turns into one more indict-the-system polemic with little emotional pull.—B.D. (84th Street Sixplex and Embassy 4.)

DEVIL IN A BLUE DRESS—Denzel Washington plays Easy Rawlins, the hero of Walter Mosley's popular detective novels. The action takes place in 1948; Easy, an unemployed veteran, reluctantly agrees to help a shady-looking white man (Tom Sizemore) locate a woman who may be lying low in one of L.A.'s black neighborhoods. The movie, written and directed by Carl Franklin ("One False Move"), is the most enjoyable private-eye film in a long time: a modest, skillful, unfussy genre piece that tells an exciting story and lets its more serious concerns remain just below the surface. Also with Jennifer Beals and Don Cheadle (who does a virtuoso comic turn as Easy's homicidal sidekick, Mouse).—T.R. (10/2/95) (Waverly and 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ Gemini; through Nov. 9.)

The Doom Generation—Gregg Araki's aimless road movie is chicly anarchic—and a bore. The grunged-down teen-age characters (named Xavier Red, Jordan White, and Amy Blue) are pretty, and they talk like foul-mouthed Lolitas, but only when they leave the violent roadway for a motel bed does the film develop any snap. Araki has made a punk-rock movie, all dirty fingernails and spit, but it's no fun—he's forgotten the mosh pit.—B.D. (Angelika Film Center.)

Fair Game—William Baldwin and Cindy Crawford star as a Miami police detective and the lawyer he is assigned to protect from a gang of homicidal bank robbers, in a thriller directed by Andrew Sipes. (Village East Cinemas, 34th St. East, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and National Twin.)

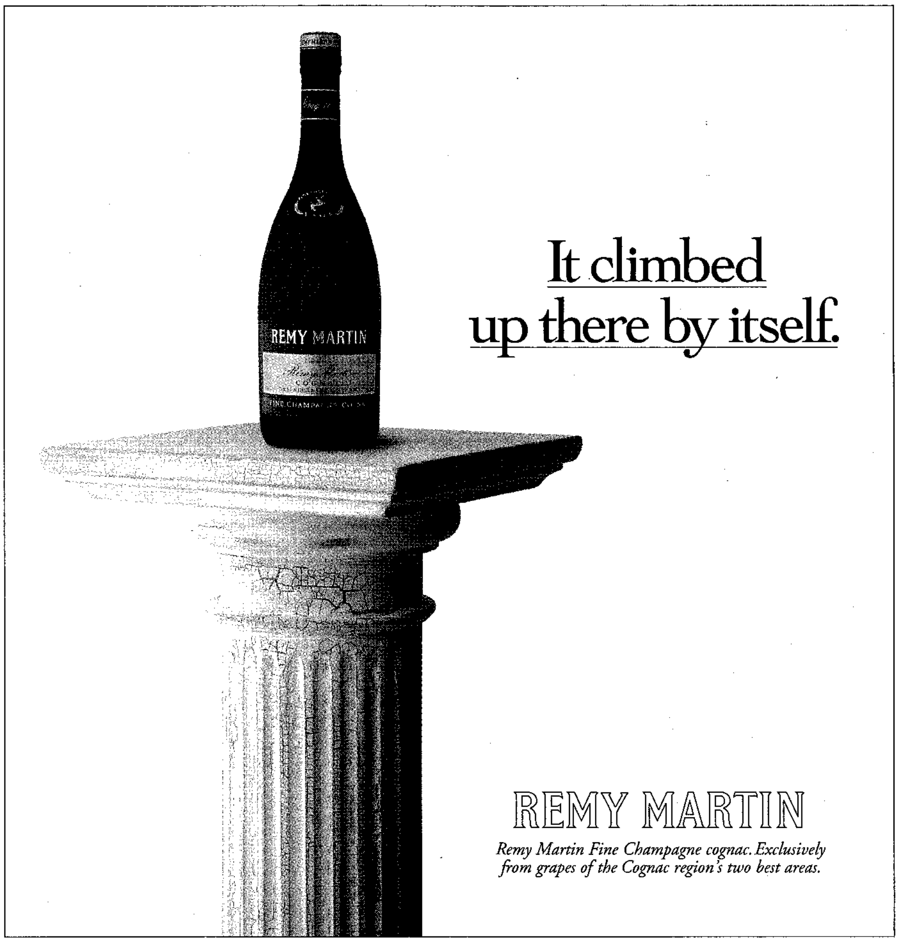
Get Shorty—John Travolta plays Chili Palmer, a small-time Miami loan shark who winds up in Hollywood, where he discovers his true métier and fulfills his destiny: he becomes a movie producer. Scott Frank's screenplay is based on an Elmore Leonard novel. The director, Barry Sonnenfeld, doesn't have the dexterity to trap the story's tiny, quick ironies; he works too strenuously for laughs. But Travolta's no-sweat acting—which deftly captures the dry comic tone of Leonard's prose—keeps the movie watchable. Also with Rene Russo, Gene Hackman, Danny DeVito, Delroy Lindo, and Dennis Farina.—T.R. (10/23/95) (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, Baronet, Coronet, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, and Criterion Center.)

Gold Diggers: The Secret of Bear Mountain—In which two thirteen-year-old girls (Christina Ricci and Anna Chlumsky) go looking for gold near their small Pacific Northwest town. Directed by Kevin James Dobson. (Village Theatre VII, 59th Street East Cinema, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and National Twin.)

Home for the Holidays—Jodie Foster directed this comedy-drama about family relations during the Thanksgiving weekend. With Holly Hunter. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, Tower East, Orpheum VII, Waverly, Guild, and Lincoln Square.)

How to Make an American Quilt—Winona Ryder plays Finn, a graduate student who spends the summer at the home of her grandmother (Ellen Burstyn) and her great-aunt (Anne Bancroft), interviewing members of a quilting circle for her thesis and deciding whether to marry her down-to-earth boyfriend. The characters represent possible paths of womanhood: there's a lonely widow (Kate Nelligan), a thwarted housewife (Lois Smith), a free spirit (Alfre Woodard)—everything but a lesbian. Saying that Ryder was born to play the self-conscious, narcissistic Finn is not exactly praise. Directed by Jocelyn Moorhouse ("Proof").—S.K. (First & 62nd Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, Lincoln Square, and Olympia.)

Kicking and Screaming—Noah Baumbach's first movie focusses on the indecisive, enervated months that four college buddies spend together after graduation, before they go their separate ways. What finally makes them move on, and sets this film apart from other slacker comedies, is the women they're attracted to: risk-taking students who are more capable than their men of standing on their own. Baumbach doesn't write grand speeches; he lets details and repartee carry the movie's emotional weight. The picture has a lovely, understated autobiographical lilt. The perfect ensemble cast includes Josh Hamilton, Olivia d'Abo, Parker Posey, and the reigning king of independent-film ennui, Eric Stoltz.—B.D. (Angelika Film Center and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)



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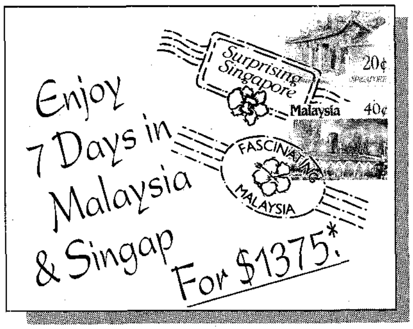

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The Kingdom—A four-and-a-half-hour drama (originally made for Danish television) about the strange staff of a haunted hospital in Copenhagen. Directed by Lars von Trier. In Danish and Swedish. (Angelika 57.)

Leaving Las Vegas—In Mike Figgis's startlingly beautiful new movie, Nicolas Cage gives a great performance as a failed writer who is consciously drinking himself to death. Cage captures the character's fearsomely undirected vitality—the muddled will that gives this drunk both the strength to die and the perverse ability to enjoy what's killing him. Figgis tells the story as a series of vivid, intense moments: snapshots of a man for whom neither the past nor the future has any meaning. The sole trace of conventional drama is the hero's affair with a kindhearted young hooker (superbly played by Elisabeth Shue). But the possibility that love will rescue him from his fate vanishes quickly, like a mirage. Although the movie is terribly, crushingly sad, its honesty is invigorating: it names its poison and downs it, neat. Also with Julian Sands. Figgis's screenplay is based on a 1990 novel by John O'Brien, who committed suicide last year at the age of thirty-three.—T.R. (11/6/95) (Village Theatre VII, Beekman, and Lincoln Square.)

Lessons of Darkness—Werner Herzog's documentary on the 1991 Gulf War. (Film Forum.)

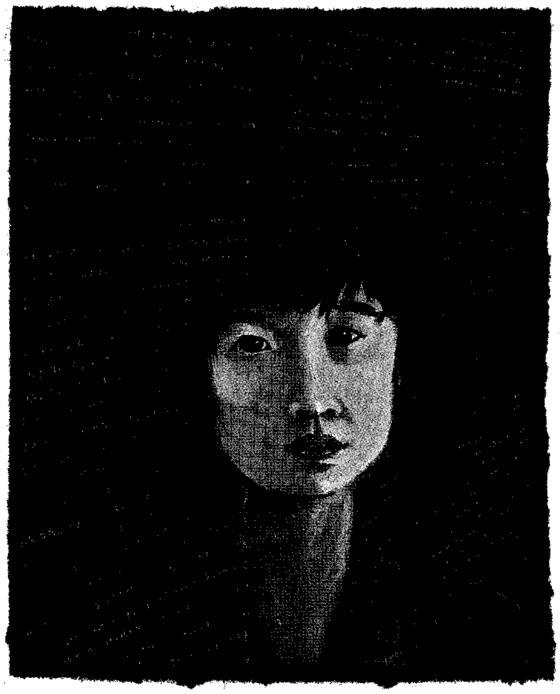
Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision—Freida Lee Mock's documentary portrait of the architect whose works include the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, in Washington, D.C., and the Civil Rights Memorial, in Montgomery, Alabama. (Quad Cinema.)

Mighty Aphrodite—Woody Allen stars in his latest picture as Lenny, a New York sportswriter bored by his wife (Helena Bonham Carter) and attracted to a hooker (Mira Sorvino) who happens to be the mother—though she doesn't know it—of his adopted son. It would be easy to accuse Allen of working out some personal demons here, but the movie doesn't come across as therapy. It treads enjoyably over old ground, and it has a surprisingly foul mouth, though rather than cruising along with the ease of Allen's best work it tends to hobble, and it closes in a flurry of undecided endings. Sorvino's comic momentum rescues the picture: with the high, fainting voice of Miss Piggy and a brazen good cheer to match, she offers the alarming prospect of sexual comedy without neurosis. You don't see *that* too often in a Woody Allen film.—A.L. (10/30/95) (19th Street East 6, Cinema I, Art Greenwich Twin, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Les Misérables—Jean-Paul Belmondo, looking like a wise, weather-beaten walrus, plays an illiterate ex-boxer who befriends an intellectual Jewish family fleeing the Nazis. They read him Victor Hugo; he identifies with the stoic reformed hero Jean Valjean and begins to carry out good works in his own life. Claude Lelouch's adaptation of the 1862 novel plays fast and loose with its setting and social context but preserves the melodrama and the conviction (so old-fashioned as to seem almost revolutionary) that some people are good and others just plain evil. A righteous, passionate, and witty soap opera. In French.—S.K. (19th Street East 6 and Lincoln Square.)

A Month by the Lake—The era is the nineteen-thirties. Vanessa Redgrave is amazing as Miss Bentley, a spinster photographer who has travelled to Lake Como to find love; the actress avoids all the repressed-schoolmarm clichés of the role and plays it as a loud, slightly infantile tomboy. Edward Fox is equally touching, and eccentric, as a lonely major. Trevor Bentham wrote the oddly suspenseful script, based on a novella by H. E. Bates; John Irvin directed. Also with Uma Thurman.—S.K. (Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, and Plaza.)

Never Talk to Strangers—A criminal psychologist (Rebecca De Mornay) assigned to investigate a series of murders falls in love with a mysterious stranger (Antonio Banderas), in a thriller directed by Peter Hall. With Dennis Miller and Harry Dean Stanton. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 23rd St. West Triplex, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)



At the Quad Cinema, "Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision."

ABIRA ALI

Nobody Loves Me—Writer-director Doris Dörrie's romantic comedy concerns a lonely twenty-nine-year-old airport security guard (Maria Schrader) who befriends a psychic (Pierre Sanoussi-Bliss). In German. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The November Men—A black comedy directed by Paul Williams, who also stars as an independent filmmaker shooting a movie about a presidential assassination. (Quad Cinema.)

Now and Then—A writer (Demi Moore), a starlet (Melanie Griffith), a doctor (Rosie O'Donnell), and a housewife (Rita Wilson) gather in their Indiana hometown and recall the summer of 1970, when they were twelve and left to their own devices by parents beginning to experiment with divorce and hedonism. The phony "Big Chill" premise is a shame—the four talented actresses who play the girls (Gaby Hoffmann, Thora Birch, Christina Ricci, and Ashleigh Aston Moore, respectively) could have carried the movie far better on their own. The film ends with a depressing bit of postfeminist wisdom: the future sexpot and the future housewife—the ones who close their eyes and buy the stereotypes—wind up the most fulfilled. Written by I. Marlene King; directed, baggily, by Lesli Linka Glatter.—S.K. (Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Gotham Cinema, 86th Street East Twin, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

The Postman—Antonio Skármeta's bittersweet 1985 novel, "Burning Patience," upon which this movie is loosely based, told the story of Mario, a lonely postman who delivers mail to Pablo Neruda in Isla Negra, the desolate corner of Chile where the poet spent his final years. In Michael Radford's lovely but sanitized version, the action has been moved two decades earlier to picturesque Italy. As Neruda, the great Philippe Noiret somehow conquers being dubbed in Spanish-accented Italian; as Mario, the late Italian comedian Massimo Troisi is painfully affecting. In Italian.—S.K. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Eastside Playhouse, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Powder—A saccharine nightmare about an albino teen-ager with telekinetic powers and an otherworldly I.Q. (he was born during a thunderstorm). The beginning is a blatant rip-off of "Edward Scissorhands": the boy (Sean Patrick Flanery), whose eerie alabaster skin has kept him from interacting with others, is left alone by the death of his guardian; a kindly woman (Mary Steenburgen) takes him out of hiding and shows him the world. When he is taunted and bullied, the film moves into De Palma territory—things explode around him as they did around Andrew Stevens in "The Fury." But instead of going for wicked and funny, the director, Victor Salva, cues the maudlin music, and the movie becomes a tearjerker. It crashes (fittingly) in a final lightning storm of special effects.—B.D. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, Lincoln Square, and Embassy 3.)

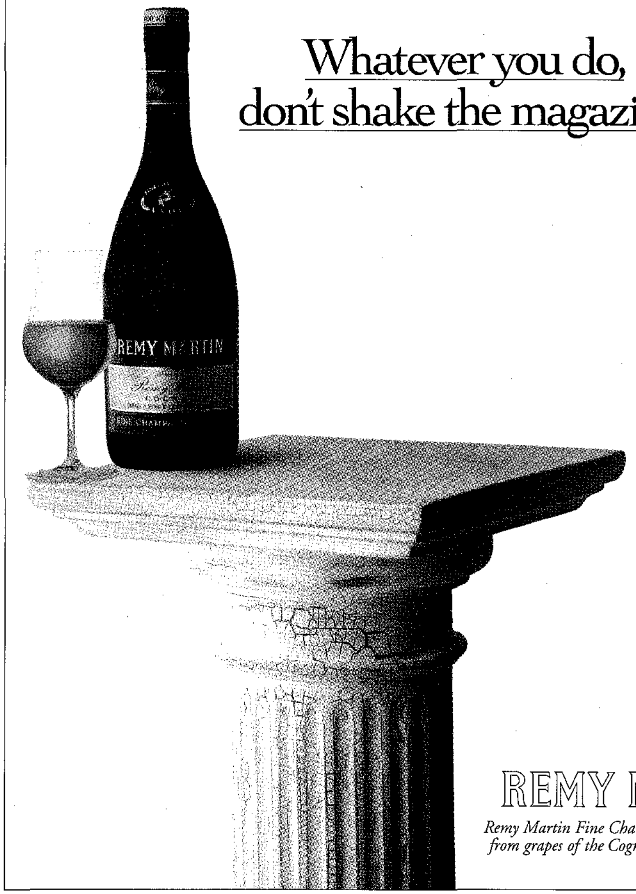
Seven—The murders in David Fincher's serial-killer mystery are grisly tableaux, each artfully arranged to illustrate one of the seven deadly sins. This kind of self-conscious literary conceit can work if it's handled with a light, parodic touch, but the movie's clammy design and glum cinematography try to persuade us that what we're watching is a serious meditation on the nature of evil. The police detectives are Morgan Freeman, as weary old Somerset, and Brad Pitt, as brash young Mills; Freeman, with his immense dignity and authority, manages to keep his head above water, but Pitt goes under.—T.R. (Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema II, Orpheum VII, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center.)

Smoke—Five years ago, the director Wayne Wang asked the novelist Paul Auster to work up one of his stories as a screenplay. The result—a highly cerebral intertwining of the lives of white and black characters in Brooklyn in 1990, centering on a cigar-store owner (Harvey Keitel) and a lonely writer (William Hurt)—is obviously a labor of love. But Wang's sentimentality and Auster's self-consciousness don't go together: the direction is literal, and the lines sound like short-story dialogue read aloud. Only Forest Whitaker, playing a guilty father, comes off well. A gorgeous sequence that runs behind the final credits—with no dialogue, just a song by Tom Waits—suggests what the film *might* have been. With Harold Perrineau, Jr., Stockard Channing, and Ashley Judd.—S.K. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Spike & Mike's Festival of Animation '95—Fifteen short films, including Alison Snowden and David Fine's "Bob's Birthday" and Nick Park's "The Wrong Trousers." (Cinema Village.)

Strange Days—The year 2000 is hours away, the streets of Los Angeles are erupting with civil strife, and ex-cop Lenny Nero (Ralph Fiennes) has just received what appears to be evidence of police racism, rape, and murder. (The movie is like a mad fantasia on the Rodney King episode.) Enlisting the help of Max (Tom Sizemore) and Mace (Angela Bassett), Lenny sets out to crack the case. But for the director, Kathryn Bigelow, the case is mainly an excuse to let it rip. This is her loudest, most relentlessly wired movie to date. Some of the actors head straight over the top, too—Juliette Lewis is unwatchable in the role of Lenny's old girlfriend. But Fiennes holds steady; his moody, lonely performance lends the story an air of calm despair. Screenplay by James Cameron and Jay Cocks.—A.L. (10/9/95) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 23rd St. West Triplex, Ziegfeld, and Regency.)

Three Wishes—A romantic adventure set in 1955, starring Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio as a young mother and Patrick Swayze as a magical drifter. Directed by Martha Coolidge. (First & 62nd Cinemas, East 85th Street, Waverly, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Lincoln Square.)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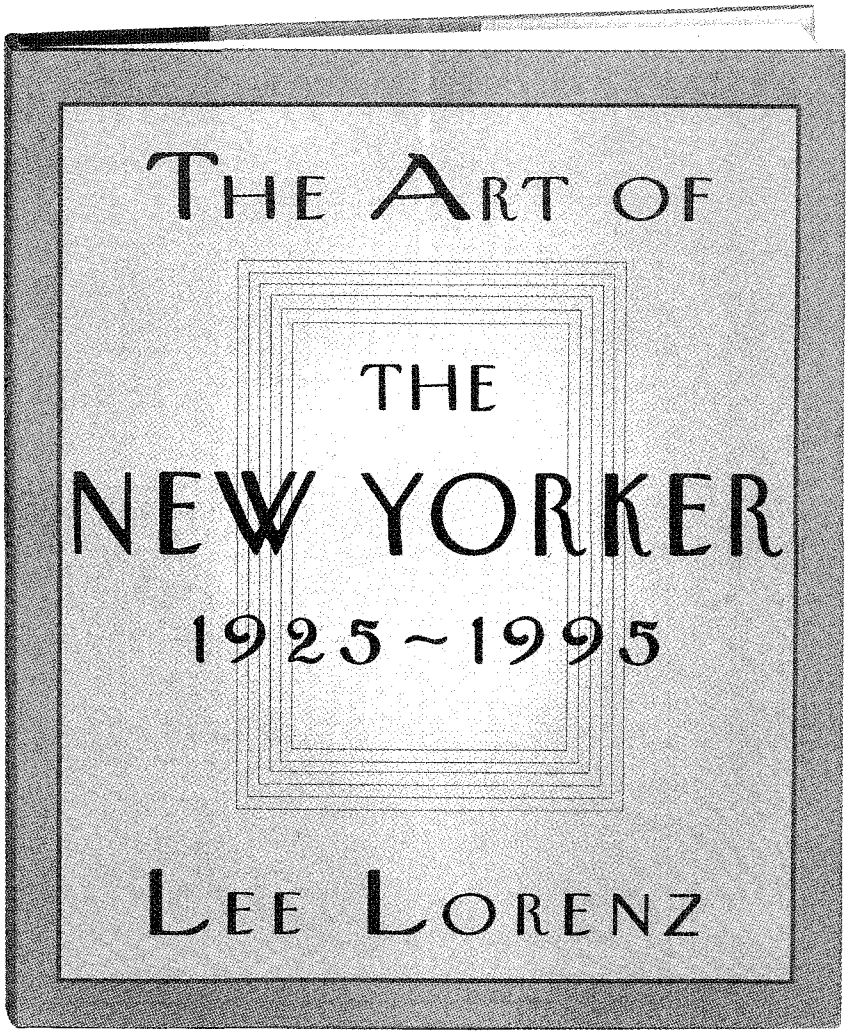

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To Die For—Director Gus Van Sant's latest movie is his funniest, but also his least adventurous. Adapted by Buck Henry from Joyce Maynard's 1992 novel, it tells the story of Suzanne Stone (Nicole Kidman), a suburban nobody who, bored with her husband (Matt Dillon), decides to become a somebody in the world of television. She joins a local station, starts to shoot a documentary about three schoolkids, and gradually lures them into her web. The film is smartly structured, but Van Sant's touch is uncertain: the story's satirical bite begins to loosen as his camera lingers more and more on the plain, disaffected teen-agers. One of them is played by Joaquin Phoenix, whose brother River was so extraordinary in "My Own Private Idaho"; it's as though Van Sant longed to recapture the wayward, carnal atmosphere of the earlier movie but found himself locked in a smaller, more brittle project.—A.L. (Village Theatre VII, First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

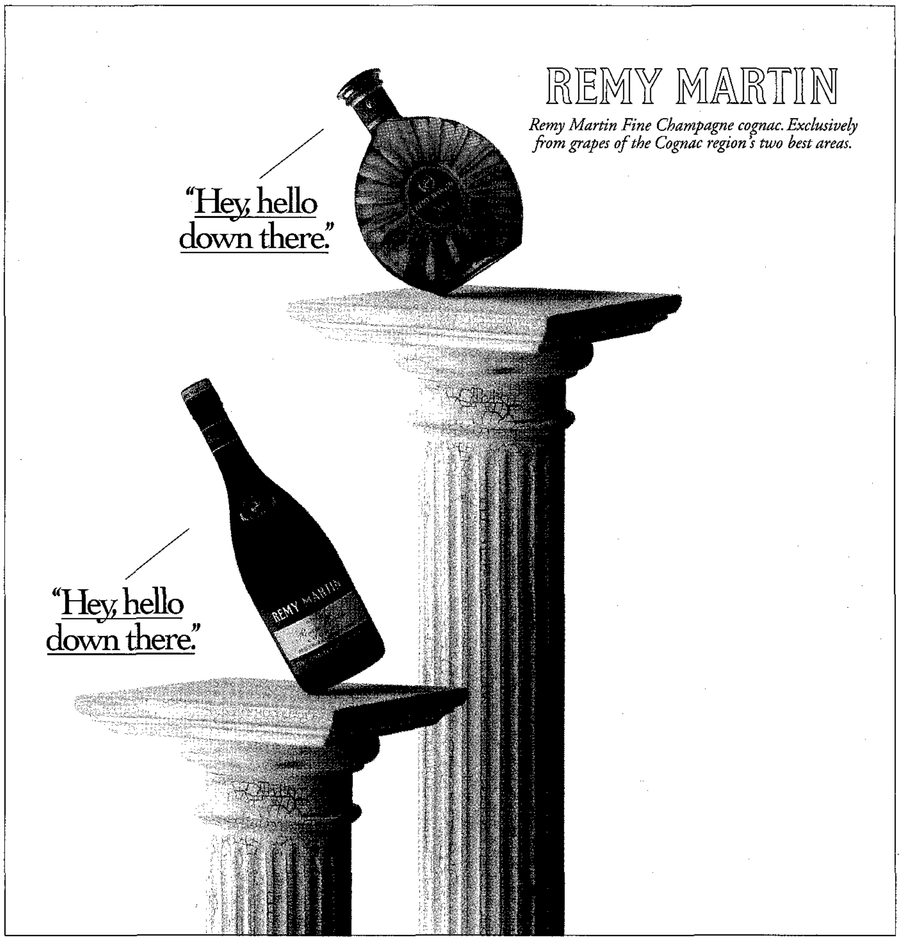
Total Eclipse—The relationship of Arthur Rimbaud (Leonardo DiCaprio) and Paul Verlaine (David Thewlis), as envisioned by Christopher Hampton, first as a play, now as a film, and directed by Agnieszka Holland. With Romane Bohringer. (Village Theatre VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Unstrung Heroes—Diane Keaton's film, about a boy who goes to live with his uncles in a time of crisis (his mother is dying), is based on sportswriter Franz Lidz's 1991 memoir; the script, by Richard LaGravenese, spins sentimental cotton candy around the experience. Keaton's style is fluid and detailed, and she gets lovely performances from her actors, particularly Maury Chaykin, as the neurotic uncle who clutters his nest with old newspapers and junk, and John Turturro, as the boy's sad, down-to-earth dad. In the end, though, the film is undone by its shaky premise that crazy people are more in touch with life than their rational counterparts. It tries too hard to make lunacy endearing.—B.D. (Cinema 3rd Avenue.)

Unzipped—A witty and fascinating look at the fashion designer Isaac Mizrahi during the months leading up to his fall, 1994, show. Director Douglas Keeve and editor Paula Heredia capture the absurd amount of work that goes into the twenty-minute unveiling of a collection that consists largely of pink and orange fake furs. Mizrahi—warm if occasionally dictatorial—plays to the camera like a natural star. It's nice to see a behind-the-scenes documentary that isn't just out to expose warts. With Naomi Campbell, Cindy Crawford, Kate Moss, and other very familiar faces.—S.K. (Cinema 3.)

The Usual Suspects—A treat. Five criminals, ranging from petty to pro, are herded into a police lineup on suspicion of armed robbery. They walk, but not before joining forces to plan a new crime—a bright idea that soon darkens with treachery and ends in a bulk order of dead bodies. Director Bryan Singer and screenwriter Christopher McQuarrie somehow keep from getting lost in the spiralling plot, a game in which everyone—the good, the bad, and the audience—gets to play sucker. Singer's style may overheat now and then, but his cast, headed by Chazz Palminteri and Kevin Spacey, keeps things cool.—A.L. (8/14/95) (New York Twin, East 85th Street, Quad Cinema, and Lincoln Square.)

Vampire in Brooklyn—Eddie Murphy gives the laughs to his supporting actors, but not out of generosity: the jokes aren't funny, just recycled bits from movies like "An American Werewolf in London" and "Love at First Bite." As the violent bloodsucker who tries to lure Angela Bassett into his coffin, the star lowers his voice and flattens his energy; it's disheartening to see him so lost in his attempt to reinvent himself. (Allen Payne, who plays the rival for Bassett's affections, is far more charming.) This picture isn't going to break Murphy's creative losing streak—it's a jack-o'-lantern without



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ALSO PLAYING

BABE (reviewed in our issue of 9/4/95): Manhattan Twin. . . . **BEYOND RANGOON** (8/21-28/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **BURNT BY THE SUN** (5/8/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **DANGEROUS MINDS** (8/21-28/95): Movieland 8th Street Triplex. . . . **DR. JEKYLL AND MS. HYDE:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **FEAST OF JULY:** 68th St. Playhouse. . . . **JADE:** Astor Plaza. . . . **JEFFREY:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **PERSUASION** (9/25/95): Paris. . . . **SHOWGIRLS** (10/9/95): Criterion Center. . . . **SPECIES:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **A WALK IN THE CLOUDS:** Worldwide Cinemas.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th St.
Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
34th St. East, 241 E. 34th St.
Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th St.
Sutton I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th St.
Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th St.
Plaza, 42 E. 58th St.
Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th St.
Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th St.
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th St.
Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th St.
New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th St.
68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th St.
Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st St.
East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th St.
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th St.
86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th St.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of 6th Ave. (727-8110).
Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.
Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th Sts.
Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St.
Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (757-2280).
Regency, Broadway at 67th St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Metro Cinema I and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
Embassy I, Broadway at 46th St.
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
National Twin, Broadway at 44th St.

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the listings following these notes.)

Laughter (1930)—A lovely, sophisticated comedy, an ode to impracticality, it failed commercially, but its attitudes and spirit influenced the screwball hits of the thirties. Fredric March is the composer-hero who returns to New York after some expatriate years in Paris; he finds that the Follies beauty (Nancy Carroll) whom he loved has married for money and lost her gift of laughter. The pacing of the director, H. d'Abbadie d'Arrast, is a little leisurely, and he dawdles just when he should move faster, but he has visual style, especially when he works in interiors or in deliberately artificial sets. With Frank Morgan as the beauty's millionaire husband.—P.K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; Nov. 12.)

Mad Max (1979)—A reckless, talented, adrenaline-pumping piece of high-speed exploitation filmmaking. George Miller's dystopian action saga about the running combat between brute cops and bikers Down Under plays on our love/hate for hot wheels and our need for and fear of authority. The saintly super-policeman Max (Mel Gibson) dreads that he'll become like the people he chases—living for pursuit and carnage—but after some of these barbarians savage his friends and family, he outdoes his enemies in cold sadism. Miller's nihilistic vision of the future is a black-comic cornucopia. He sets up his panoramic images as survival courses: cyclists leap on their victims like wildcats or swarm around them like gnats. It's part mobile disaster movie, part madcap apocalypse.—M.S. (Museum of Modern Art; Nov. 10 and 12.)

Princess Yang Kwei Fei (1955)—Kenji Mizoguchi retells the life of the eighth-century Chinese servant girl who entranced the last emperor of the T'ang dynasty while her family soaked the empire: a Cinderella story in which the stepsisters get the upper hand and everybody dies. Despite moments of affecting beauty (the color and décor are ravishing), this sentimental movie has little of the psychological penetration or power of Mizoguchi's "Ugetsu" and "Sansho the Bailiff." The monarch (Masayuki Mori) is so wrapped up in his music that from the beginning you wonder who's minding the kingdom; and in Mizoguchi's version (unlike others), the heroine (Machiko Kyo) isn't just Cinderella, she's also Sydney Carton, sacrificing herself for her true love. Still, the director is a master of the rending climax; at the end he leaves the plot behind and enters a realm of pure sublimity. In Japanese.—M.S. (Symphony Space; Nov. 14.)

Violent Cop (1989)—An overheated Tokyo variation on the familiar theme of the rogue detective outraging superiors as he chews his way through the drug world's food chain. The director-star, Takeshi (Beat) Kitano, a onetime standup comic and talk-show host, definitely has *something*—but what? As an actor he shows off two specialties: putting scrapes and scratches on a deadpan and flicking into battle with the abrupt cartoon efficiency of a toy. As a moviemaker he employs the same tactics, masking his intentions for a scene until he detonates it with a punch line (or a punch). For a while he generates humor-charged suspense, but by the end he can keep the movie crackling only by increasing the dosage of kinkiness and mayhem. The unsettling score (by Daisaku Kume) intersperses what sounds like a slowed-down Japanese takeoff on klezmer music with quotes from Eric Satie. In Japanese.—M.S. (Walter Reade Theatre; Nov. 12 and 14.)

LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Through Nov. 16: Films directed by the Soviet director Sergei Paradjanov; in Russian, with English subtitles.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A series of films from Australia. Nov. 9 at 2:30 and Nov. 11 at 2: Documentaries by Alan Anderson, Joan Long, and Keith Gow. . . . Nov. 9 at 6: "Caddie" (1976, Donald Crombie). . . . Nov. 10 at 2:30 and Nov. 13 at 6: "Razorback" (1984, Russell Mulcahy). . . . Nov. 10 at 6 and Nov. 12 at 2: "Mad Max" (†). . . . Nov. 10 at 8:15 and Nov. 12 at 5: "The Road Warrior" (1981, George Miller). . . . Nov. 11 at 5: "Don's Party" (1976, Bruce Beresford). . . . Nov. 13 at 2:30 and Nov. 14 at 6: "Waiting" (1991, Jackie McKimmie). . . . Nov. 14 at 2:30: "In the Wake of the Bounty" (1933, Charles Chauvel). . . . ¶ Films based on the novels of Knut Hamsun. Nov. 10 at 6 and Nov. 12 at 2:30: "Two Green Feathers" (1995, Henning Carlsen; in Norwegian and Danish). . . . Nov. 11 at 2:30 and Nov. 14 at 3: "Pan" (1922, Harald Schwenzen; a silent film). . . . Nov. 11 at 5: "Pan" (1937, Olaf Fjord; in German, with Czech subtitles). . . . Nov. 12 at 5: "Hunger" (1966, Carlsen; in Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish). . . . Nov. 13 at 3: "Victoria" (1979, Bo Widerberg). . . . Nov. 13 at 6: "Ice Age" (1974, Peter Zadek; in German). . . . Nov. 14 at 6: "Wanderers" (1989, Ola Solum; in Norwegian).

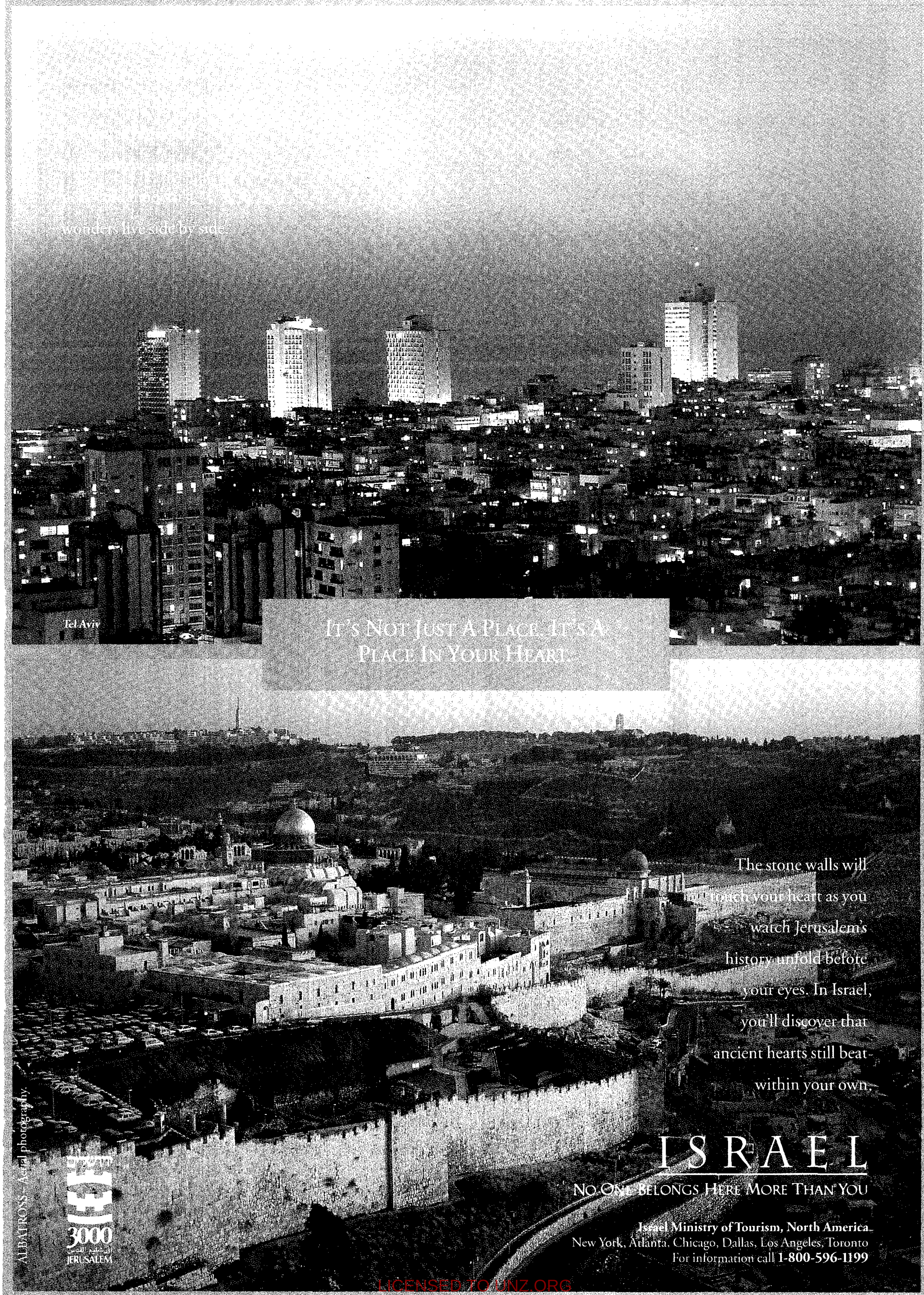
At the Walter Reade Theatre, films directed by or starring Takeshi Kitano.

O. KARPINSKY

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level (875-5600)—A program of independent Japanese films (all in Japanese, with English subtitles), including "Violent Cop" (†), "Boiling Point" (1990), "Gonin" (1995), and "Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence" (1983), which Takeshi Kitano directed or appeared in. . . . ¶ Weekend showings for children. Nov. 11-12 at 2: "One Little Indian" (1973, Bernard McEveety).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (1-718 784-0077)—A sampling of films made at the Astoria Studio over its seventy-five-year history. Nov. 11 at 2: "The Letter" (1929, Jean De Limur and Monta Bell). . . . Nov. 11 at 3:30: "Applause" (1929, Rouben Mamoulian). . . . Nov. 12 at 2: "Laughter" (†). . . . Nov. 12 at 4: "The Smiling Lieutenant" (1931, Ernst Lubitsch).

Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (864-5400)—Nov. 14 at 7: "Black Orpheus" (1959, Marcel Camus; in Portuguese). . . . Nov. 14 at 9: "Princess Yang Kwei Fei" (†).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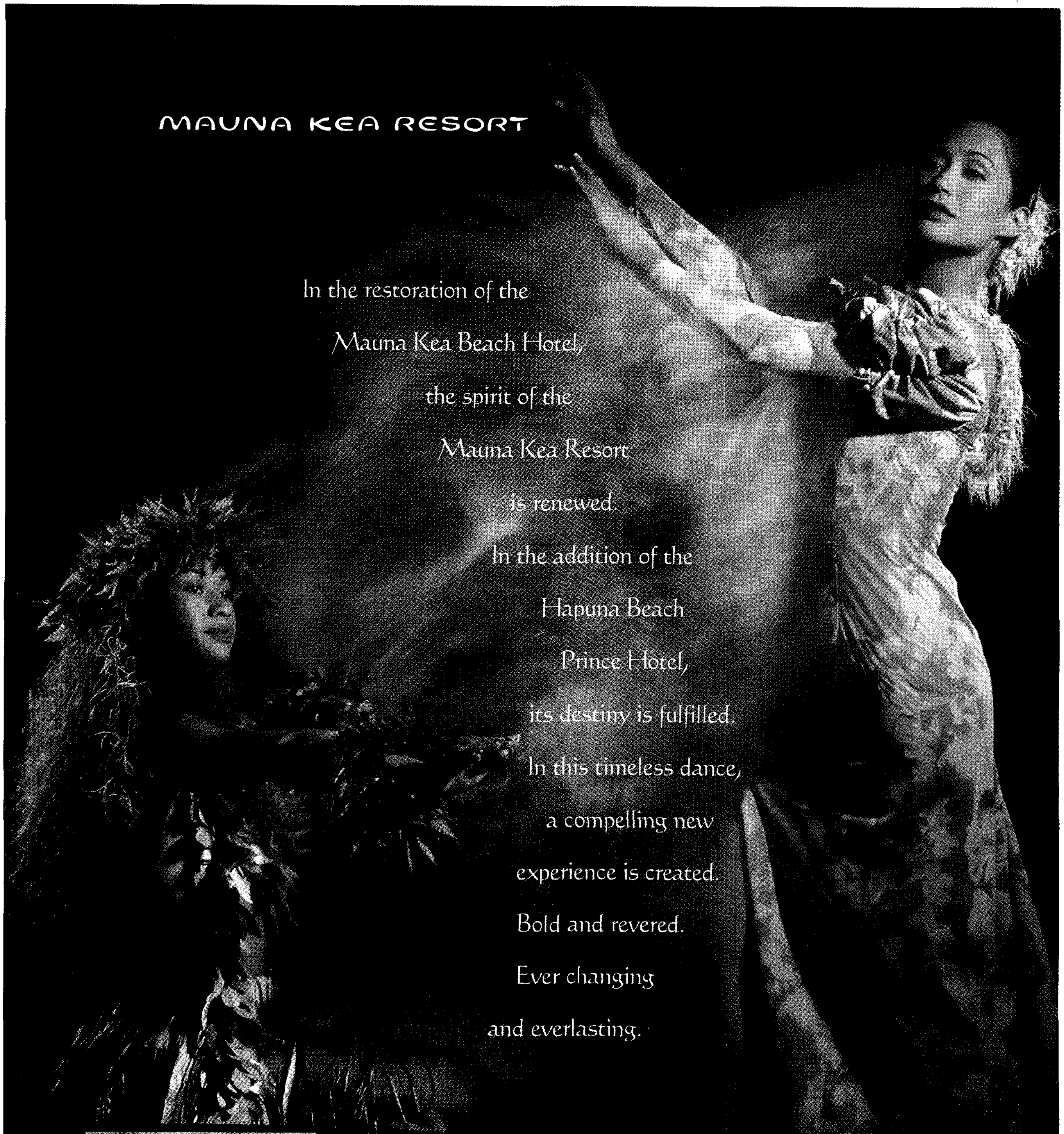

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

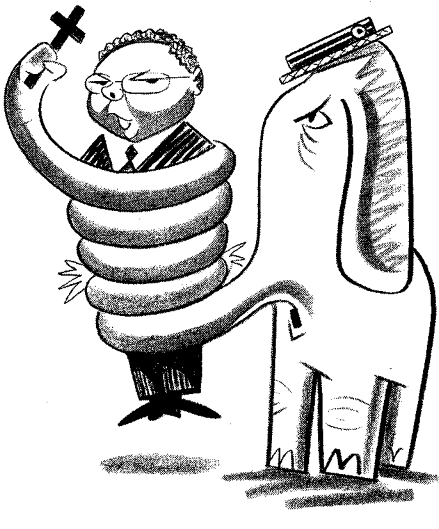
TAKING ISSUE WITH THE ISSUES

WHY do the talking heads keep saying that voters have no idea where Colin Powell stands on the issues? Just by occasionally walking through a room whose furnishings include a television set, you'd know this much about Powell's views: he is a strong believer in free-market economics; he would be reluctant to send American troops abroad; he is essentially pro-choice; he is amenable to some restrictions on gun ownership; he is opposed to prayer in schools; he views America as a society that is still sufficiently racist to require some form of affirmative action; he is against openly allowing gays in the military; he thinks the Contract with America is a bit harsh in its treatment of Americans who need help. Does the average voter really know that much about what Richard Lugar believes?

What do voters know about Lamar Alexander? They know that he walks around in a flannel shirt and that he'd answer that he is the only outsider in the race even if the question was whether or not he had change for a quarter. Would their opinion of him be affected by knowing more about where he stands on the issues? They are told constantly where Phil Gramm stands on the issues—Gramm drones on about where he stands on the issues until they beg for mercy—and their impression of him still corresponds with a quote that appeared last spring in *Texas Monthly:* "Even his friends don't like him." What seems to interest voters about Bob Dole's stand on the issues is not what it is but how far he's been willing to move it. Does the junior Forbes's presentation of the flat tax as magic bullet make voters wonder about what effect such a tax policy would have on the American economy or about what sort of man would be obsessed with a plan that calls for him to pay income tax at precisely the same rate as the crew of his yacht? Is Pat Buchanan doing better than predicted because of his views on, say, protective tariffs or because the presence of an unreconstructed, unapologetic mad-dog reactionary seems refreshing among candidates who are always positioning themselves frantically, like so many starlets jostling for flattering angles in a group shot?

It may be that the reason commentators keep saying we don't know where Powell stands is that they are reluctant to examine the possibility that they've been wrong all along about the beliefs a candidate absolutely has to have in order to win Republican primaries. Even when the election was still a couple of years away, they had bought the line preached by Ralph Reed, of the Christian Coalition, who makes Republican primary voters sound like such rabid Christians that you'd think the Republican National Committee would now be engaged in widespread litigation to allow snake-handlers into voting booths.

Reed says that these soldiers of Christ will not vote for someone who is pro-choice, but surveys show that Powell would be the preferred candidate of people who intend to vote in Republican primaries. As it turns out, they tend to be pro-choice themselves. (A New York *Times*/CBS News poll just released shows that among people who expect to vote in Republican primaries thirty-eight per cent consider themselves pro-choice and thirty-three per cent consider themselves pro-life.) A lot of them must be for Powell even if they disagree with him on that issue. One of the fictions that have grown out of the constant interviewing of Reed and other arbiters of right-wing political correctness is that Americans vote for a Presidential candidate mainly because of where he stands on certain clearly defined issues.



Colin Powell

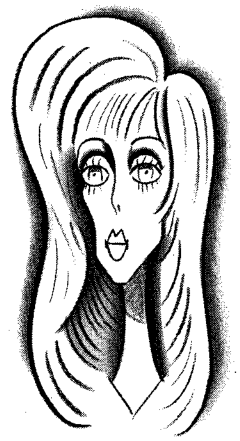
They don't, and they're wise not to: usually, the issues argued over in a campaign are not the issues that the new President will have to deal with anyway. Would it have been wise in 1960 to cast your vote for John F. Kennedy or Richard M. Nixon according to their stands on whether or not the United States should defend the islands of Quemoy and Matsu? It's even easy to figure out where Colin Powell would stand on the defense of Quemoy and Matsu, by the way. He'd be against it. As it happens, nobody remembers now where Kennedy or Nixon stood.

A SOAP WITH GRIT

IF your subscription to *Soap Opera Digest* has recently expired, you may yet be unaware of the great changes at the ABC soap "Loving." The show has undergone a complete makeover, and as of November 13th will be known as "The City." No, it's true. And the show will no longer be set in sleepy, even narcoleptic, Corinth, Pennsylvania, but here, in the

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROBERT RISKO

city that never sleeps. Not only that but several new characters will join the cast: Sydney Chase, a bitchy media mogul played by Morgan Fairchild and described by the network as “a Rupert Murdoch in drag”; Nick Rivers, a failed musician who roams Times Square in cowboy boots, a guitar case slung over his shoulder; Bernardo Castro, the industrious building superintendent; and Zoey, a wayward young con artist who hangs out in Washington Square Park and looks as though she’d wandered off the set of “Kids.”



Morgan Fairchild

THE initial problem was simple. “There are ten soap operas,” Jean Dadario Burke, the show’s executive producer, said the other day, “and in the ratings ‘Loving’ is consistently tenth. We were facing certain death, so I said let’s do something drastic.” She proposed a macabre three-step plan. Step 1 was to get a celebrity lead: enter Fairchild. Step 2 was to move the show’s setting to New York, which was accomplished through plot twists too plenteous and arcane to recount. Step 3 was the cast changes. To make room for the new characters, the network would have to dispose of some of “Loving” ’s old characters—a complicated task in the world of soaps, where viewers expect and deserve some resolution. In this case, that task would be accomplished through a serial killer.

Once the network endorsed Dadario Burke’s proposals, she called a fateful meeting with her unsuspecting cast. “I told them, ‘The good news is we’re not cancelled,’ ” she recalled. “ ‘The bad news is that half of you are going, and some more bad news is I can’t tell you exactly who’s going.’ ” Over the next few weeks, the terminally scripted actors were summoned individually to Dadario Burke’s office, where, she said, “we went through many boxes of tissues.”

Victim No. 1 was Stacey, played by the only original cast member remaining on the show. “She represented the old ‘Loving,’ ” a network spokesman said, sounding a bit Mob-like. “So we killed her to show that we really meant business.” Stacey died by powdering herself with poison-laced talc. Jeremy, a sculptor, was fatally encased in plaster. An elderly couple, Cabot and Isabelle, died from toxic fumes emitted by candles they’d received as a fiftieth-anniversary gift. Curtis died when he inhaled poisoned air in a sensory-deprivation tank at a mental hospital. There was no blood in any of the killings. “I thought they should be gentle murders,” Dadario Burke said. In all, eight characters were lost to the subplot: there were six actual victims, the murderer committed suicide, and one character moved to Florida, freaked out by all the senseless death.

Predictably, the serial-killer plot has caused a surge in ratings, and ABC hopes that viewers, hooked like junkies, will hang in there for “The City.” The new show is based around a building on Greene Street in SoHo. The hyperkinetic pace, funky camera angles, and quick cuts may at first jar those “Loving” viewers accustomed to a comfortably steady procession of corpses. The revamped show has the unmistakable resonance of “Melrose Place” and MTV’s “The Real World,” with that dash of “Kids” tossed in for good measure. In daytime television, with its fine line between too terrible and not terrible enough, such a combination offers great promise.

Last week, it was revealed that the serial killer was a Corinth resident named Gwenyth Alden. She dressed up like her daughter before committing the crimes. Gwenyth killed not out of greed or revenge but because of a troubled relationship with her family. It’s a craven motive, to be sure, and one suggesting that the soaps have learned something from their afternoon-talk-show competition: dysfunction sells.

CREATING A SCENE

SOMETIMES having a hit seems easy. Surviving it is the hard part. André Balazs, the proprietor of the Chateau Marmont, the quirkily modish hotel on Sunset Boulevard, in Los Angeles, and Sean MacPherson, doyen of a slew of fashionable L.A. haunts, don’t doubt that the Bar Marmont, in which they are partners, and which will open this week just next door to the hotel, will be a piping hot spot. In fact, that is just the problem, because L.A. hot spots quickly tend to get colder than a dog’s nose. “We want to seem like a hotel bar that was always there but has just been dusted off,” Balazs said.

Hiring the appropriate staff is crucial. Auditions were recently held in a poky plank-built office on top of the building that houses the bar. The first up, Kimberly—a young woman with a Botticelli frizzle of long blond hair—found herself facing Balazs, MacPherson, and John Camacho, who will be the bar manager. MacPherson eyed Kimberly’s employment records and asked about a club where she had worked. There were “problems,” she said. “They have that whole stuck-up, are-you-on-the-list feeling.”

“That’s exactly what this place is not about,” Balazs assured her.

“You have to be friendly whether people are famous or not,” Kimberly said.

MacPherson reeled off a long drink order and asked how she would handle it. She did so with expertise. “The Martini: Gin or vodka? Olive, onion, or twist? Straight up or on the rocks?”

“Are you an actress?” Balazs asked.

After a slight pause, she said, “Yeah . . . yeah . . . I’m an actress,” with comical resignation.

Next up was Otto, a tall, bald man with two earrings, a goatee, and a reputation for elegant crowd control. The new bar’s owners had been told that Otto had been feuding with another likely prospect, Robert, who is also bald, and even more flamboyant, having worked as a go-go-dancing drag queen. MacPherson asked about this. Otto, who had a crisp, almost military delivery, assured him that there were no hard feelings. “Only, my eyeballs turned into *hard stones* when I thought there’d be a bald person getting more attention than me,” he said.

Shari, the next applicant, was a tall young woman who had recently arrived from Manhattan. In New York, she worked at a bar at Broadway and Bleecker. “It was cocktail city,” she said. “Kamikazes. Red Devils. I can make a margarita with my eyes closed. We had eighteen thousand different tequilas. This kind of shot, that kind of shot. You went crazy.”

Finally, there came none other than Robert. “Did you run into Otto?” he was asked. Yes, he had. Were there words? “No. We’ve completely made up,” Robert confirmed. He then came up with a sample of his majordomo manner. “We haven’t seen you for how long? Two days? *It’s too much.*”

“That’s exactly what we want,” MacPherson said.

Balazs said, "This is a place where things are constantly happening that everyone isn't necessarily aware of. You're here with your girlfriend and your wife is coming in the door. And you are onto it, and you can handle those kinds of things."

"And no attitude. There's no room for that at all," MacPherson added.

"There's enough of that already. That's what's wrong with going out," Robert agreed.

The four contemplated the peculiar ecology of L.A. night life. "The reality is that there will be a crowded sidewalk scene for the first six months," MacPherson said. "Then the trendy people go and you pop through to something more interesting. But during those six months we will inevitably piss some people off, no matter how hard we try. You've got a place that holds a hundred people, and five hundred show up."

"What do you do if you see there's a real V.I.P. out there?" Camacho asked.

"The usual. You deal with it," Robert said, amid comfortable laughter all around.

SPEAKER OF THE CASINO

DEMOCRATS had reason to be heartened by the Western States Republican Leadership Conference recently held in Las Vegas. The four-day affair, which was billed as a fund-raiser to help Republicans win back the West from President Clinton, was supposed to be a forum for Republican Presidential hopefuls. But in the end Patrick Buchanan, Arlen Specter, Richard Lugar, and Lamar Alexander all backed out, some of them citing concern over the event's location: Sin City, at the world's largest casino, the MGM Grand. Although organizers had expected around two thousand attendees, only five hundred people showed up to hear Bob Dole and Phil Gramm speak. The biggest draw was a man who isn't even running for President, at least not yet: House Speaker Newt Gingrich.

The MGM, a neon-green behemoth designed to resemble Oz, has an atrium with a seven-story replica of the Emerald City; a yellow brick road (it looks like yellow linoleum); plastic corn; and a mechanical Dorothy, who repeatedly says, "I'm not in Kansas anymore." (Dole could have told her that.) Gingrich spoke in the hotel's Grand Garden Arena, next to the enormous gilded casino, on the last day of the conference. It was a Sunday morning, and even at 8 A.M. the slot machines were

DAYTON WITH DESTINY

DAYTON was lucky to be chosen. That was the condescending message from the greater world as the Bosnian peace talks began at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, a few miles out of town. The Los Angeles *Times* called Dayton a "quiet, staid Midwestern city," which might "seem an unlikely place for the complex diplomatic talks." Dayton and Wright-Pat, it appeared, had been picked for their historic role because they were in the back of beyond. Stranded there, unable to play to their supporters, the delegates of the homicidal ex-Yugoslav factions might actually make peace.

Welcome
to
DAYTON

I was stranded in Dayton, Ohio, from 1940 to 1944, from age seven to eleven, and had (as I once recounted in these pages) the time of my life. Shipped over from England to escape Hitler's bombs, I was taken in by Otto and Eloise Spaeth, who already had four children. In their big house in the Dayton suburb of Oakwood, I was treated like a son: sent to the nearby grade school, fed, clothed, and (very mildly) disciplined. My newspaper route took me past the mansion where Orville Wright pottered. On the golf course, caddying for Otto—a machine-tool manufacturer and modern-art collector—I met Charles Kettering, co-inventor of the automobile self-starter.

The city buzzed with industrial enterprise: National Cash Register, Delco, Mead, Frigidaire—American names! Divisions of General Motors built tank components. Small companies like Otto's made parts for guns and planes. Although the city had come to be for many a refuge from Europe, it didn't seem to turn its back on the world: the Art Institute had Italian Madonnas and British beauties; the Dayton Philharmonic played Beethoven and Brahms; the Papal Nuncio and Allied air marshals paid visits. The East Coast might be a long day's railroad journey away, but Otto took us to Wright Field to see the B-17s that would soon be bombing the Axis powers.

My wife, whose wartime years were lived close to a Yorkshire airbase that was sometimes strafed and bombed, thinks I had an overprivileged childhood. I think all children should. My view of the world was formed willy-nilly in those four years by Oakwood neighbors, Dayton inventiveness, Spaeth love. I went back a month ago to Oakwood High—where I would have been a member of the class of 1950 if I hadn't been shipped back home—to help some former schoolmates plant a tree to commemorate others, no longer living.

Today, Dayton, like many other U.S. cities, has become its suburbs. "Downtown" is a few mini-skyscrapers and neatly landscaped lots that used to be offices and stores. NCR has been submerged into A.T. & T. But there are many gleaming high-tech plants; unemployment is lower than elsewhere in Ohio, and educational aspiration higher. Most Daytonians seem modestly pleased that their city is the home town not only of Orville and Wilbur but of Paul Laurence Dunbar, Jonathan Winters, Erma Bombeck, and Edwin Moses. From Washington or Geneva, Dayton may appear to be the American provinces, but those who live there like it. Many of my Oakwood school friends have never moved away; some have moved into their parents' houses.

So, if we're talking of luck, I'd say it's the peace-talk delegates who are fortunate to be in a good part of the world. Yet the desired results might be more quickly forthcoming if, instead of being kept at the airbase, the delegates were allowed into town. The representatives from Zagreb and Sarajevo, Pale and Belgrade might glimpse what a century or so in one corner of a melting pot can bring about by way of peaceful prosperity, when energies are not hate-directed. And then this "lucky" Ohio city might be remembered as the place where the Bosnian killing stopped.

—ANTHONY BAILEY

clanging like church bells. At the entrance to the arena, a portrait of Ronald Reagan, looking a little like Elvis, stood sentry. The picture had been supplied by a local artist, who courteously left his business cards on the easel.

Seven hundred and fifty people gathered to hear Gingrich speak, but at the back of the room more than half a dozen tables were empty. A handful of reporters eyed them hungrily. As it became clear that the tables would remain vacant, waiters and waitresses walked around stealthily removing "Reserved" signs. The reporters swooped in to feast on the free food. "I wonder if he'll even show," one said of Newt. (This is how rumors get started.) The empty tables were kind of an embarrassment.

FROM the podium, Randy Smith, the Idaho state chair, offered an invocation. The assembled rose and bowed their heads: "We pray, Heavenly Father, for this country, that we citizens might put patriotism above partisanship." For the next hour or so, his call went largely unheeded. Gingrich, the history professor, offered a lesson. "You notice how the Declaration is written," he said. "We are 'endowed by our Creator'—a key point here. We're the only society in history that says power goes from God to you and then it's loaned to the government. In Europe, power went from God to the king, and the king loaned power to the citizens; it's a radically different model, which is why the left is so desperate to drive God out of public life—because it's the power of God that empowers the individual against the state, and the left is desperate to transfer all power to the state and take it away from individuals." The audience hooted with delight. Gingrich elaborated: "Which means, by the way, if you kill an American, you are killing somebody who God has empowered. If you rape an American, you are raping somebody that God has empowered. It's a much different power emotionally and morally than the left's version—the left's version being randomly gathered protoplasm." The audience applauded. "This is not a political fight; this is a war between two cultures, and they are not compatible." It's a religious war, as Pat Buchanan might have said if he'd only shown up.

After the talk, people milled about. Upstairs, some of them browsed at booths that sold conservative paraphernalia. From the Official Catalog of Republican Memorabilia, one could order a handblown brass money clip, "attractive as it is useful"; elephant cufflinks in 14k. gold; and, for young Republicans, a line of children's clothing called GOP Kids. Other booths displayed T-shirts, buttons, and bumper stickers: "Save the Males," "God, Guns & Guts: Keep America Free," "Wife and Dog Missing: Reward for Dog," "If You Like Hanoi Jane You'll Love Moscow Willie," "Warning: Unattended Children Will Be Sold as Slaves," "I Love My Country! But I Fear My Elected Officials," and "Take a Bite Out of Crime: Shoot the Bastards!"

Yes, God bless us every one.

WHAT TO EXPECT

At death's door
The end in sight
Is life, not death
Each breath you take
Is breathtaking

Save your breath
Does not apply—
You must die.

—SAMUEL MENASHE

THE OTHER PEACE TALKS

SEVERE consequences await those who cross the *Post*—just ask David Letterman. Last spring, before leaving to tape a week of shows in London, Letterman granted interviews to the *Times*, the Washington *Post*, the Associated Press, and the *News*—all the major news outlets, it seemed, except the New York *Post*. He was made to pay.

When the *Post's* television editor, Adam Buckman, sat down to write a column on Letterman that week, having no interview to work with, he recalled recently, "I thought, Why don't I be the first one to write about the decline of this show? And why not make some bold predictions and say that by summertime Leno would surpass Letterman in the ratings?" This he did in classic *Post* style. Beneath the headline "DIVING DAVE'S DECLINE" Buckman wrote, "The cocky king of late-night is about to be toppled from his throne."

That was just the beginning. Over the next few months, as Buckman's predictions were coming true, the *Post* savaged Letterman. Under headlines like "JAY CLOBBERS DAVE" and "DAVE'S OUT AT HOME," the *Post* labelled Letterman a "strikeout king" and a "Late-Night Loser." The articles contained sweeping condemnations of the show: "David Letterman's reign as New York's late-night comedy king is over," the *Post* proclaimed.

There were incidental swipes as well. An article on Letterman's cigar smoking included lengthy comments from health officials enraged by Dave's on-air puffing. Then, last month, the *Post* sponsored a fax poll, asking readers, "What do you suggest Dave should do to reverse his show's ratings slide?"

Finally, after seeing a caption that read "JAY LENO: Kicking Letterman's butt," Robert Morton, the executive producer of "The Late Show," had had enough. He called Buckman and invited him over for a chat. Buckman declined. Shortly after telling Morton he wouldn't go, however, he received word from his boss, Ken Chandler, the editor of the *Post*, that Morton would be coming to the office.

Morton arrived on October 23rd, along with his show's outside public-relations man, Ken Lerer, whom Michael Milken hired to help rehabilitate his image. They met with Chandler, Buckman, and several other editors for about half an hour. Both sides called the meeting friendly. Buckman gave Morton an envelope containing the two hundred responses to the fax poll, which the *Post* had written about a few days before. Morton said, "We talked to them about the realities at CBS"—an oblique reference to the network's recent difficulties—"and we admitted that the access to Letterman and to the show is not what reporters have hoped it would be."

At least for the *Post*, that access is improving rapidly. Shortly after his meeting with Morton, Buckman was granted an interview with Letterman. It was not an exclusive—in fact, the *Daily News* scooped the *Post*—but editors were mollified enough to announce a temporary ceasefire.

"Will we stop beating them over the head every week on the issue of ratings?" Buckman asked. "Probably, because the story is getting old. Now, if Dave comes back, we'll run with that. It would be another great story, and, frankly, that's all I care about." ♦

"Taking Issue with the Issues," Calvin Trillin; "A Soap with Grit," Warren St. John; "Creating a Scene," Anthony Haden-Guest; "Speaker of the Casino," Sara Mosle; "The Other Peace Talks," Warren St. John.

Rhythms of the Caribbean

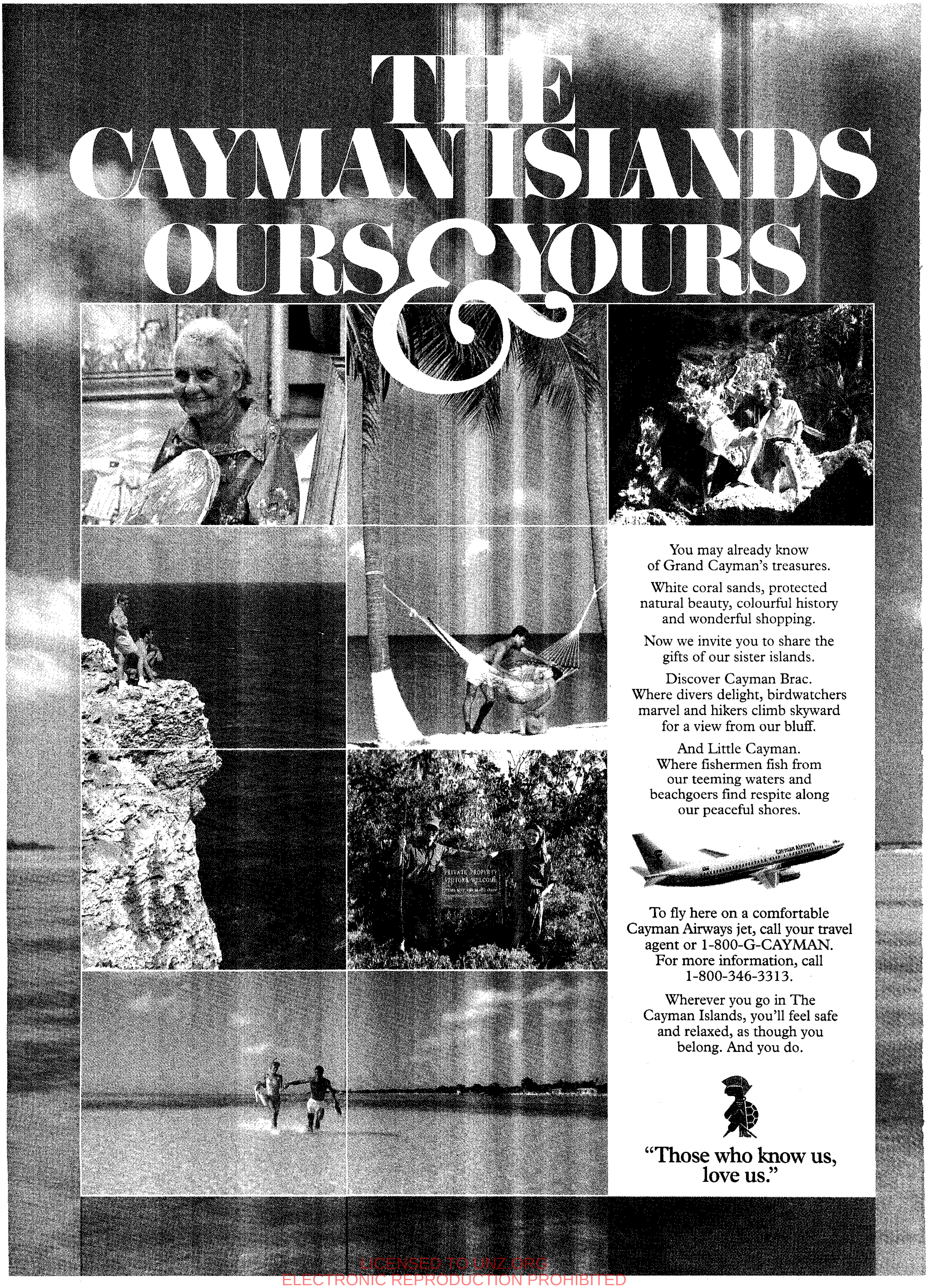
A Traveler's Guide

to Caribbean music—

where it comes from,

what to listen for,

and where to hear it.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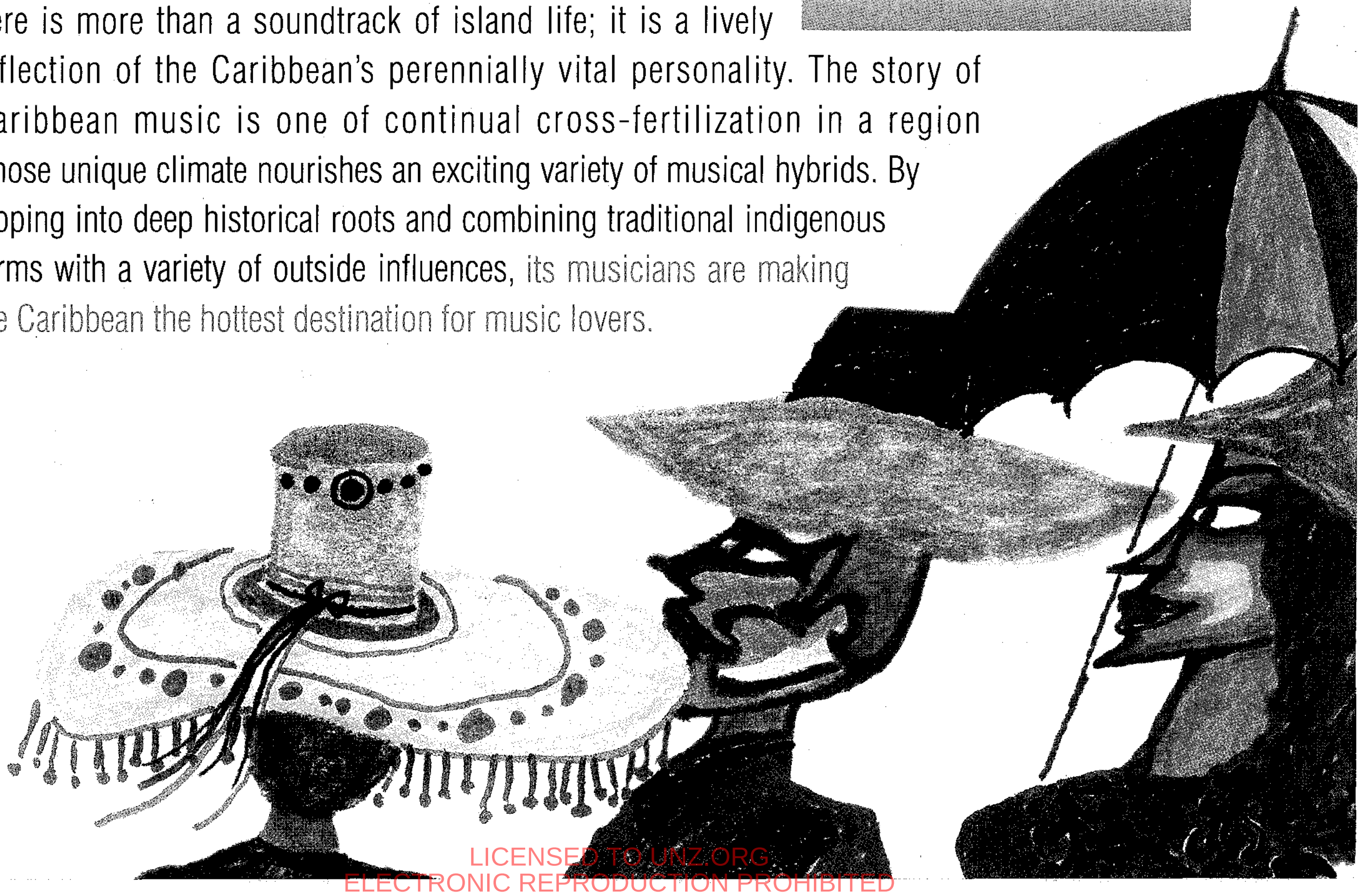
There has never been a better time to explore the fascinating world of Caribbean music, and there is no better place to enjoy it than in the warmth and natural beauty of the Caribbean itself.

Perhaps no musical phenomenon is enjoying greater popularity right now than "world music," a genre that celebrates the synergy of diverse cultural influences in creating new sounds. From a global perspective, the more fruitful musical regions are those where different nationalities, cultures, and traditions meet. No wonder Caribbean music is taking center stage on the world music scene. Like its architecture, local customs, and cuisine, the Caribbean's music reflects a rich, complex cultural history. With its mix of African, Latin, European, and pan-American influences, the Caribbean is truly a musical hothouse, and the many styles that have been created here are among the most influential in the world. The music that thrives here is more than a soundtrack of island life; it is a lively reflection of the Caribbean's perennially vital personality. The story of Caribbean music is one of continual cross-fertilization in a region whose unique climate nourishes an exciting variety of musical hybrids. By tapping into deep historical roots and combining traditional indigenous forms with a variety of outside influences, its musicians are making the Caribbean the hottest destination for music lovers.

The following pages offer a look at some of the region's most captivating music and the best places to hear it, including resorts, local clubs, and music festivals.



©1995 The New Yorker Promotion Department Illustrations by John Rombola

Jamaica is the birthplace of some of the Caribbean's most internationally popular and influential forms of music, including ***ska*** and ***reggae***, both stemming from various cultural shifts throughout the twentieth century. Over the years of the island's colonization (which began in the late 1400s) and into this century, a distinctive folk music evolved as African percussive sounds combined with Spanish, British, Irish, and pan-Caribbean influences. By the 1930s, Jamaica's most definitive musical style was the calypso-like ***mento***, whose influence waned with the arrival of American rhythm and blues in the early 1950s. Jamaican interpretation of the r&b sound in turn gave birth to *ska*, ***rock steady***, *and reggae.*

The true masters of *ska* were the members of a brilliant, short-lived (1964-65), but legendary band called the Skatalites, which included numerous configurations of musicians later to achieve wider fame as members of groups such as the Maytals, the Wailers, and the Ethiopians. In the late 1960s, the fast-moving tempo of ska began to slow down. A slower, heavier, and more vocal music emerged as ska transmuted into *rock steady.*

Some of the Caribbean's most internationally popular and influential forms of music, including ska and reggae, were born on the island of Jamaica.

At the end of the 1960s, the rock steady sound slowed even further and began to be recorded on new equipment that lent an echoed sound to guitar strumming. *Reggae* was born. The new music combined all the styles that had gone before, but with a renewed spiritual content powered by the growing numbers of Jamaican Rastafarians. The fundamental belief among all Rastafarians, whose non-doctrinal religion allows for free personal interpretation, is that Jah (God) is a living force on earth which enables an otherwise disparate humanity to unite. This spirit of brotherhood, coupled with its infectious rhythms, infused reggae with a special power that continues to inspire musicians and listeners all over the world.

Although Jimmy Cliff became the first international reggae star, it was Robert Nesta Marley who became the true messiah of the form. With his band, The Wailers, Bob Marley became Jamaica's folk poet. Today, visitors to Jamaica can tour the Bob Marley Museum in Kingston and take the Nine Mile Tour of Bob Marley's birthplace, a beautiful small mountain village tucked away in the Parish of St. Ann's. (Call 809-999-7003.)

© Jamaica Tourist Board

Jamaica's Carnival is celebrated in April with colorful parades.

Perhaps summer is the very best time for reggae enthusiasts to visit Jamaica, as the internationally renowned Reggae Sunsplash usually takes place in late July or early August (in 1996 it will be held August 1-4), with the equally stellar Reggae Sumfest usually following a few weeks later. Independence Day festivities surround the first Monday in August. For live music, some of the best local clubs include Sir Winston's, WOW, and The Cave in Montego Bay; Peppers, Countryside Club, Junkanoo Lounge, and Carlos in Kingston; Kaiser's Cafe, Central Park, MXIII, and Rick's Cafe in Negril; The Acropolis and Bill's Place in Ocho Rios.

A GLOSSARY OF CARIBBEAN MUSIC

Bomba y plena **- Two forms of Puerto Rican folk music blending elements of both Spanish and indigenous cultures**

Calypso **- Traditional form of song and comment from Trinidad**

Fungi **- Musical form native to the British Virgin Islands, whose name means "cook up" or "combination of," and characterized by a variety of instruments**

Gwo ka **- Traditional drum- and voice-based Carnival music from Guadeloupe**

Mento **- A calypso-like Jamaican folk music with a gentle, lilting melody and topical, sometimes mildly risque lyrics**

Merengue **- African-derived dance music from the Dominican Republic**

Reggae **- Jamaica's most renowned music, popularized by Bob Marley and the Rastafarian movement, embracing the Rasta ideal of unity and brotherhood. The Maytals hit, "Do The Reggay," was the first widely played song to use the term**

Rock steady **- Precursor of reggae; slower, heavier, more vocal variation of Jamaican ska**

Salsa **- Latin dance music originally developed in Puerto Rican and Cuban communities in New York, now thriving in Puerto Rico**

Ska **- Up-tempo Jamaican interpretation of New Orleans jazz and r&b; most popular in the 1960s but still widely played**

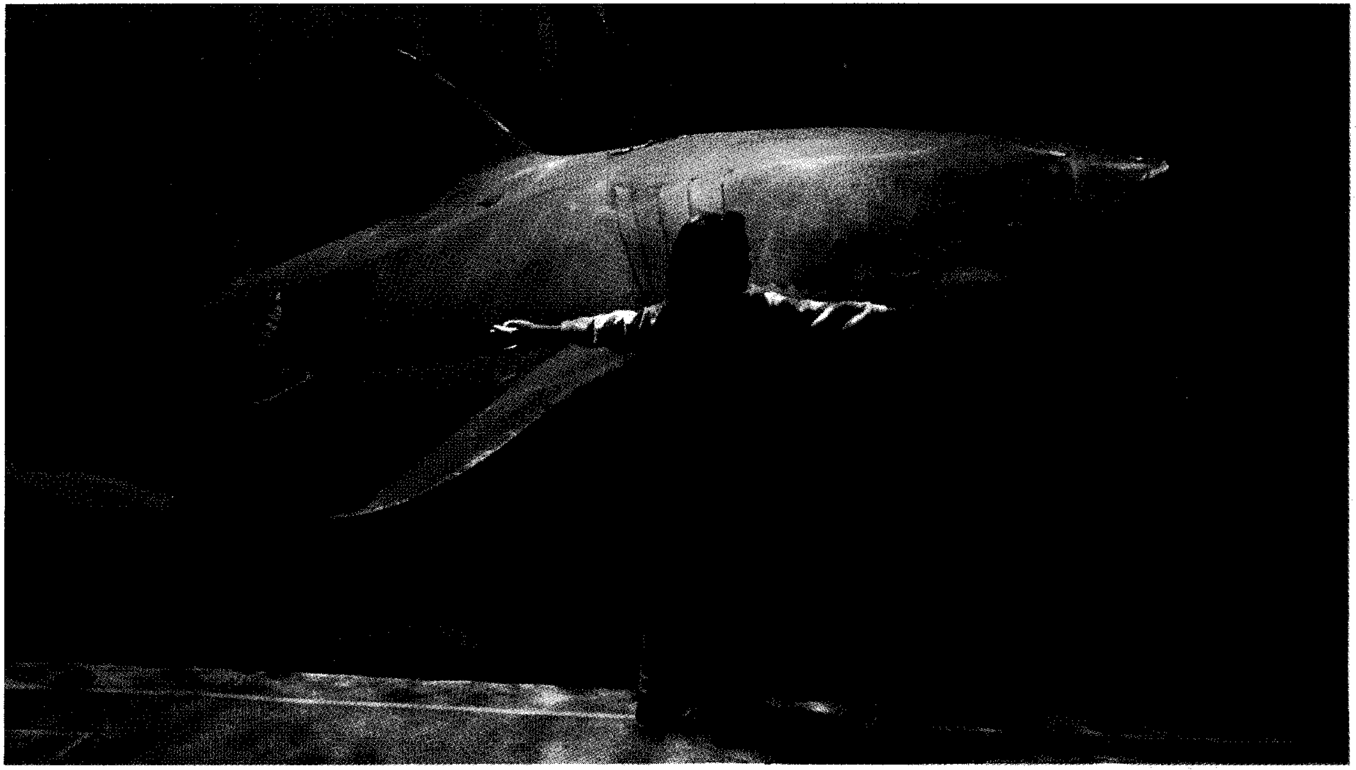
Soca **- Fusion of calypso and soul native to Trinidad and Tobago**

Spouge **- Soca-variant rhythm originating in Barbados**

Steel band **- Music of Trinidad and Tobago centering around "pans" (steel drums)**

Tumba **- From Curaçao; named after the conga drums played to produce it**

Zouk **- Hi-tech dance music from the French Antilles**



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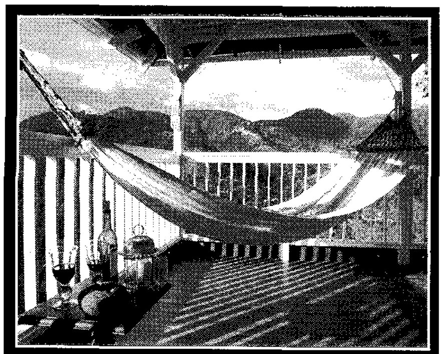

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Trinidad's Carnival sets the pace for celebration

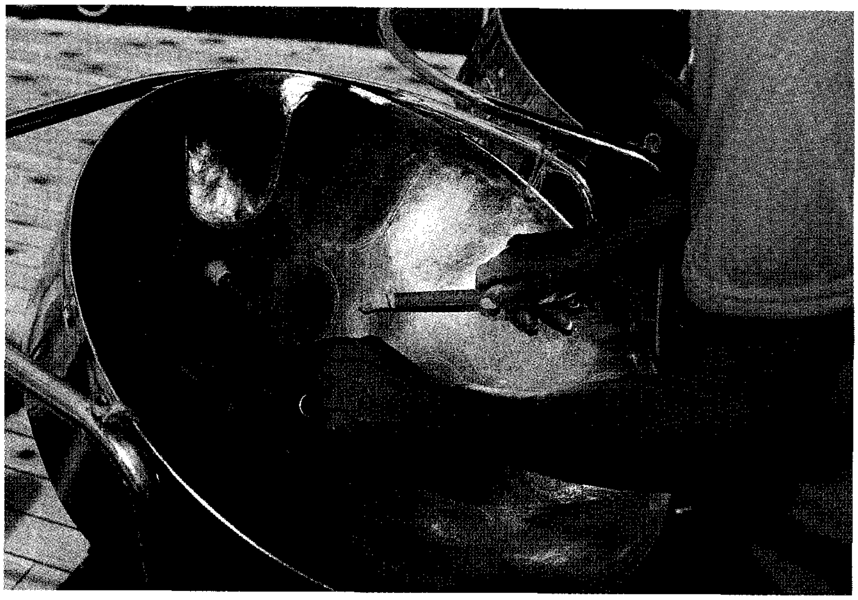
The cultural and ethnic diversity of the twin republic of **Trinidad** and **Tobago** is beautifully expressed in its many indigenous musical forms including ***calypso***, ***soca***, and ***steel band***. Rooted in African, East Indian, and European traditions, Trinidad's calypso is perhaps the most influential musical form in the Caribbean.

Since the 1970s, calypso has melded with threads of funk and mid-tempo ska to create a more soulful, Latin-oriented sound. The first of these new calypso songs to be recorded was Lord Shorty's "Soul Calypso"; the song's abbreviated name produced the term *soca*. The popular anthem of party soca, "Hot, Hot, Hot" was actually written by **Montserrat**'s favorite son, Arrow, a leader in the musical movement to intermingle Caribbean musical forms. Arrow's highly infectious dance tunes typify Trinidad's sunny, upbeat musical traditions.

Trinidadians are known for their fun-loving nature, and their expertise in the art of "fêting" is felt throughout the Caribbean, particularly in the form of Trini style Carnivals. Today, the Carnival season in Trinidad stretches from Boxing Day (the first weekday after Christmas) through Ash Wednesday, with the biggest celebrations taking place on the last two days (in 1996, on February 19th & 20th).

The steel drums, known as ***pans***, provide one of the most evocative sounds of Carnival, articulating the extraordinary resourcefulness of the Trinis in creating new forms of musical expression. Steel drum or pan bands boomed after World War II, and the joyful trill of the steel band soon came to characterize the sound of Trinidad. Today, over two hundred and fifty steel bands compete in Trinidad's annual Carnival. In addition, steel bands are featured in a number of other festivals in Trinidad, including the Panjazz Festival (to be held this year November 9th-11th), Panramajay (May), Borough Days (May), the Pan Is Beautiful Music Festival (October), and the Maroon Festival (October).

Visitors to Trinidad can experience the incomparable energy of live calypso, soca, and steelpan at many music festivals and at a wide variety of local clubs, including the Mas Camp Pub on French Street in Port of Spain, The Anchorage Pub in Chaguaramas, and Baba's on the Bay in Carenage. On Tobago, Le Beau Rivage at the Irvine Bay Hotel features live calypso fused with jazz every night.



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The steel drum, one of the few acoustic instruments to be invented in this century, evokes the sunny sound of Trinidad

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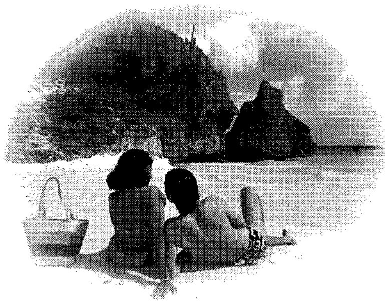

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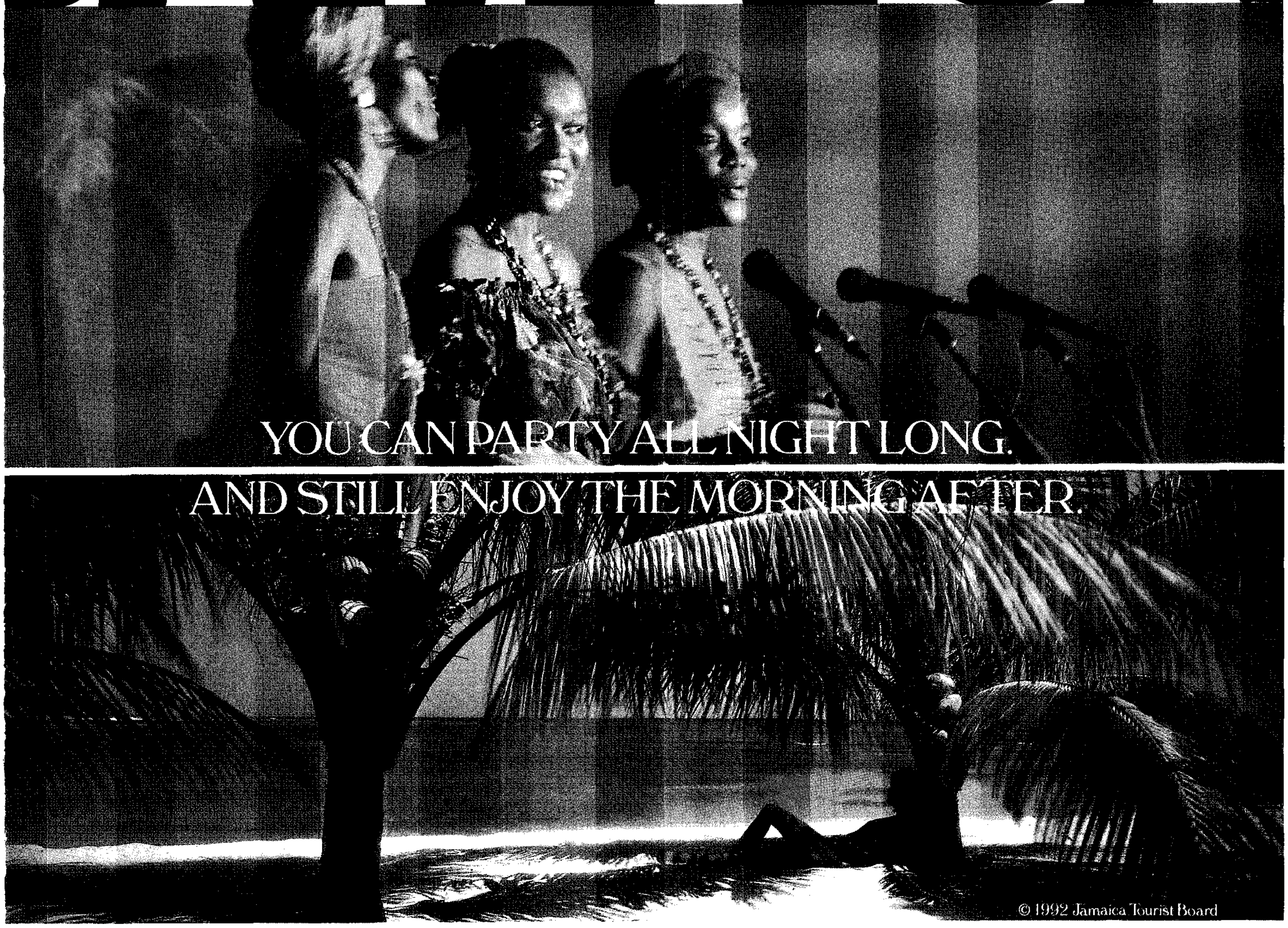
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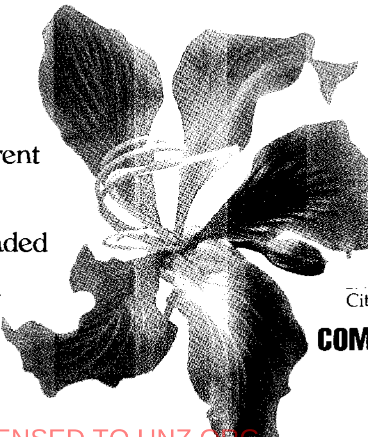

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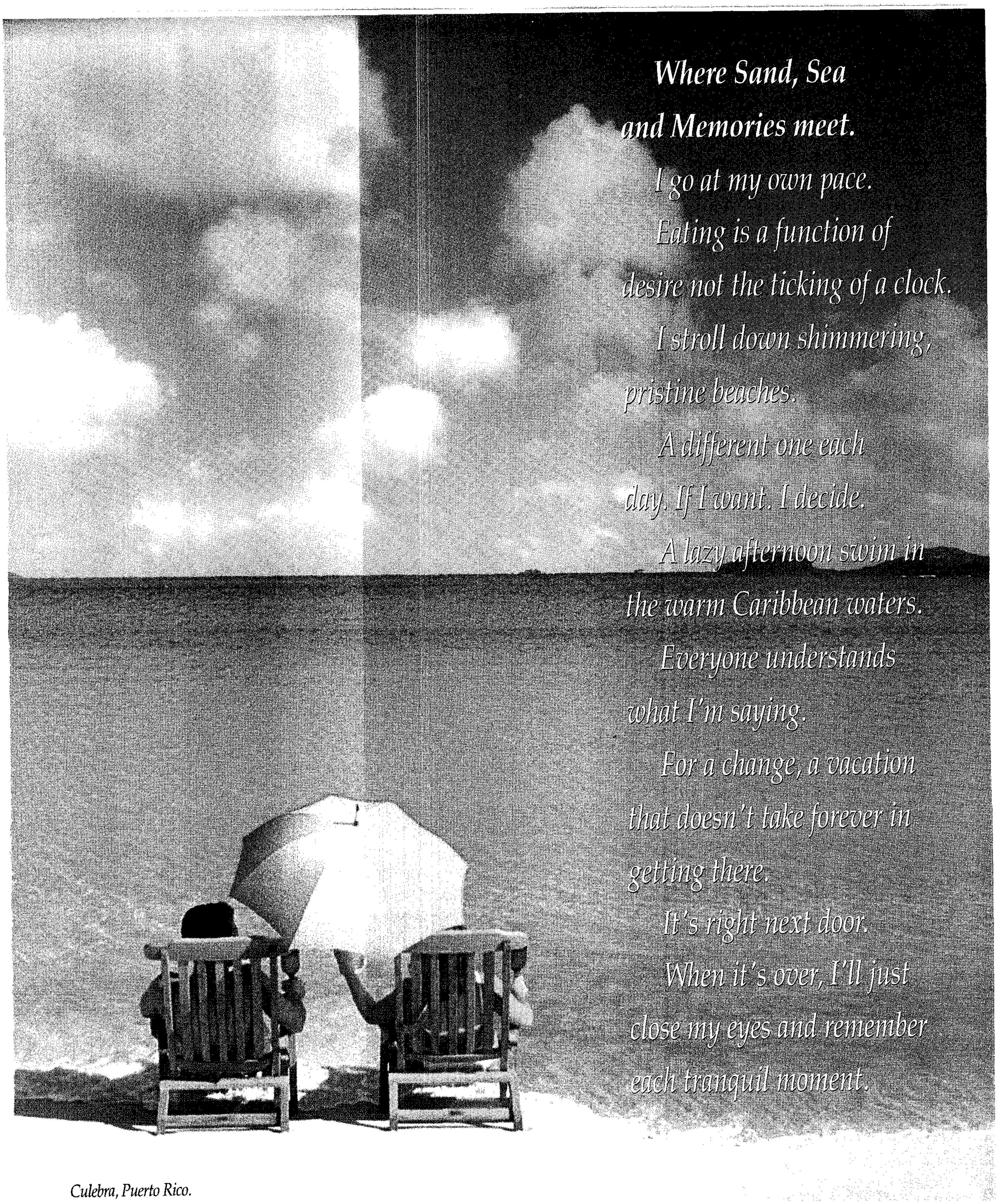
Through the 1980s and '90s, Trinidad's neighboring islands have played an ever-increasing role in the development of Caribbean music. Soca has come of age on the smaller islands of **St. Vincent**, **Grenada**, and **Barbados**. Reggae has made its influence felt through St. Vincent's Burning Flames, whose "Workie Workie" has been one of the 1990s best-selling soca tunes.

Barbados itself has become a focal point for the development and performance of Caribbean music. In the 1960s, the innovative Bajan (Barbadian) musician Jackie Opel became known for his unique interpretations of rock and pop standards and popularized ***spouge***. The Merrymen, who also became internationally renowned for their special blend of cabaret folk, calypso, and pop, still entertain at hotels and clubs all over the island. This cabaret tradition, combining several forms of Caribbean music with dance (frequently limbo and stilt dancing) is also carried on by the Barbados Dance Theatre at the Sherbourne Center, on Thursdays and Sundays and on Thursdays and Fridays at Club Xanadu, located in the Ocean View Hotel in Christ Church. Bajan floor shows and steel bands can be seen every night of the week, and visitors can dance to the hypnotic rhythms of Caribbean music in a variety of local nightclubs and hotels including the Coral Reef Club, the Ship Inn, Reggae Lounge, and After Dark in Christ Church and Harbor Lights in Bridgetown. On the mellow side, Sandy Lane's Starlight Terrace features steel bands and string quartets performing both jazz and classical music, and Cobblers Cove sways to the elegant, lilting sounds of saxophone and guitar.

A variety of music festivals reflects the Bajan spirit of inclusion. Each year Barbados traditionally hosts a jazz festival, a gospel fest, a folk concert, calypso competitions, and a classical steelpan competition as well as its Crop Over Festival (in 1996, July 15th-August 5th), a celebration of the island's history and culture, featuring parades, dance, drama, and virtually every kind of Caribbean music.

© Bob Krist, The Puerto Rico Tourism Co.

The Caribbean's hypnotic rhythms get everyone dancing at a folkloric festival in Ponce, Puerto Rico.



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© Tony Stone Images

Junkanoo Festival in the Bahamas

Diversity also largely characterizes the music of Barbados' neighboring Windward Islands of **St. Lucia**, **St. Vincent**, **Grenada**, and the **Grenadines**, including **Mustique**, **Palm Island**, and **Bequia**. The mixture of English and French heritage in the Windwards is reflected in the widespread popularity of both soca-calypso and ***zouk***, the music of **Martinique** and **Guadeloupe**. A blend of African styles, Caribbean pop, and American funk, zouk was the Caribbean's first hi-tech dance music. Zouk is a creole word that used to be slang for a "party" and shifted meanings in the 1960s. The sound systems that then replaced live music came to be called zouks. Over time, the zouk influence spread throughout the islands, making its presence felt in other Caribbean styles like soca and ***merengue***. Most of St. Vincent's most popular musicians specialize in soca. Visitors can hear live calypso, soca, zouk, and reggae at most hotels on various nights of the week and at some of

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Carnival celebrates the cultural heritage of the Caribbean in costume and song

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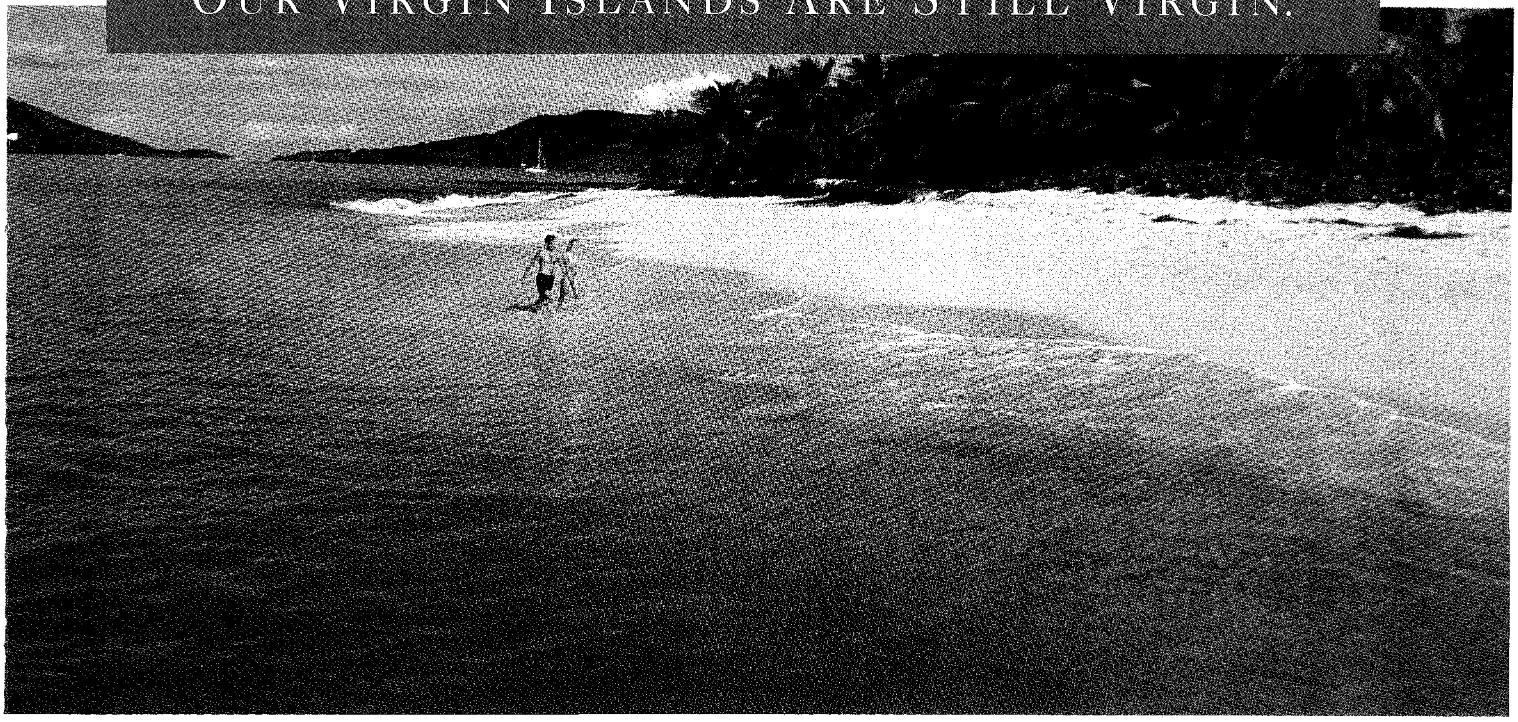

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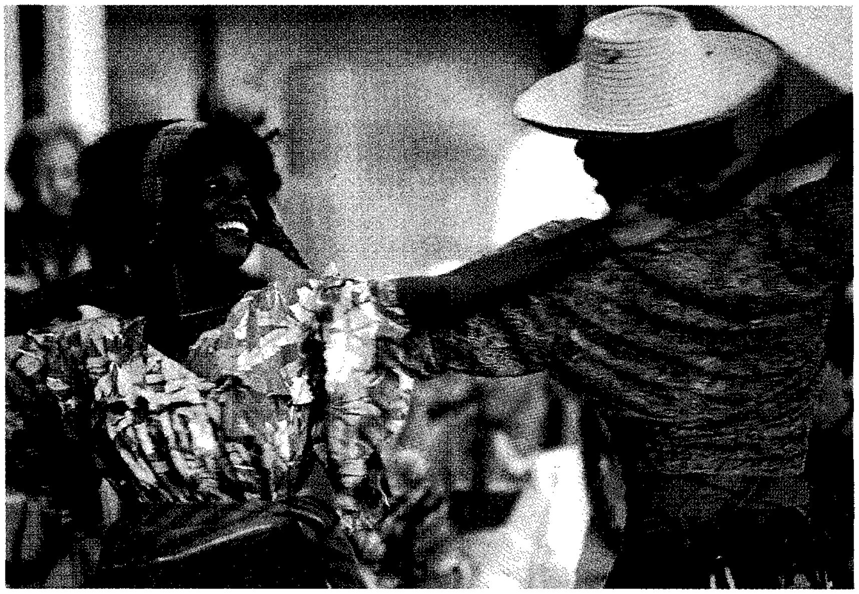


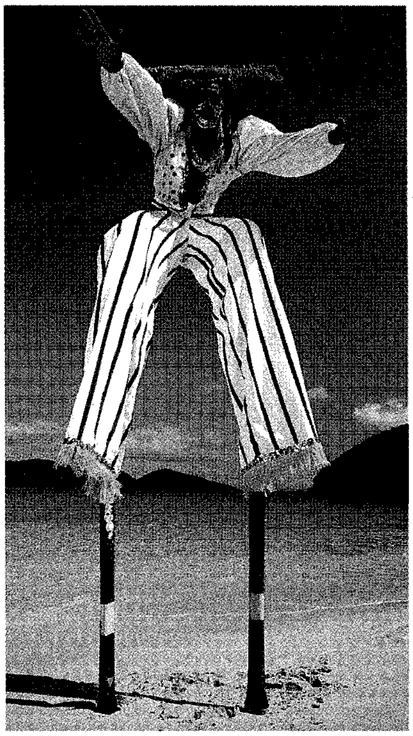
© Jon Riley, Tony Stone Images

Dancing in the street; traditions are celebrated with music and dance at lively festivals throughout the Caribbean

St. Lucia's nightspots, including the Late Lime Night Club and Indies Night Club in Rodney Bay and the Waves Beach Club near Castries. Local bands sometimes play at the Friday night street party in Gros Outlet, which usually starts at around nine P.M. and runs until three or four in the morning.

The Netherlands Antilles—including the northern trio of Saba, St. Eustatius, and St. Maarten and the southern trio of Curaçao, Bonaire, and Aruba—also reflect the diversity of their colonial heritage and the potent musical influence of their neighbors. On the northern islands, mixed English and Spanish language calypso is the most prominent musical form, and zouk is played by a small number of groups from St. Martin, the French side of the island shared with Dutch St. Maarten.

The musical culture on the second group of islands, however, reflects their close proximity to the Venezuelan coast with the infusion of African and Hispanic influences in its musical mix. All modern Caribbean dance rhythms are popular, particularly merengue, salsa antilleana, soca, and reggae. The islands' own beat, however, is the ***tumba***. Tumba is not only played by bands representing Curaçao, Bonaire, and Aruba at pan-Caribbean Carnival competitions like that of nearby Trinidad; it is also celebrated during Curaçao's own Tumba Festival, to be held next year at the Curaçao Festival Center on February 3rd. Year-round, visitors to Curaçao can enjoy a variety of music, including classical, rap, reggae, salsa, and merengue. Landhuis Brievengat, where local bands play salsa and merengue under the stars, is a favorite weekend stop for both visitors and Curaçaoans. Latin nightclubs and modern discos can also be found in the Salina area, the nightclub metropolis of Curaçao.



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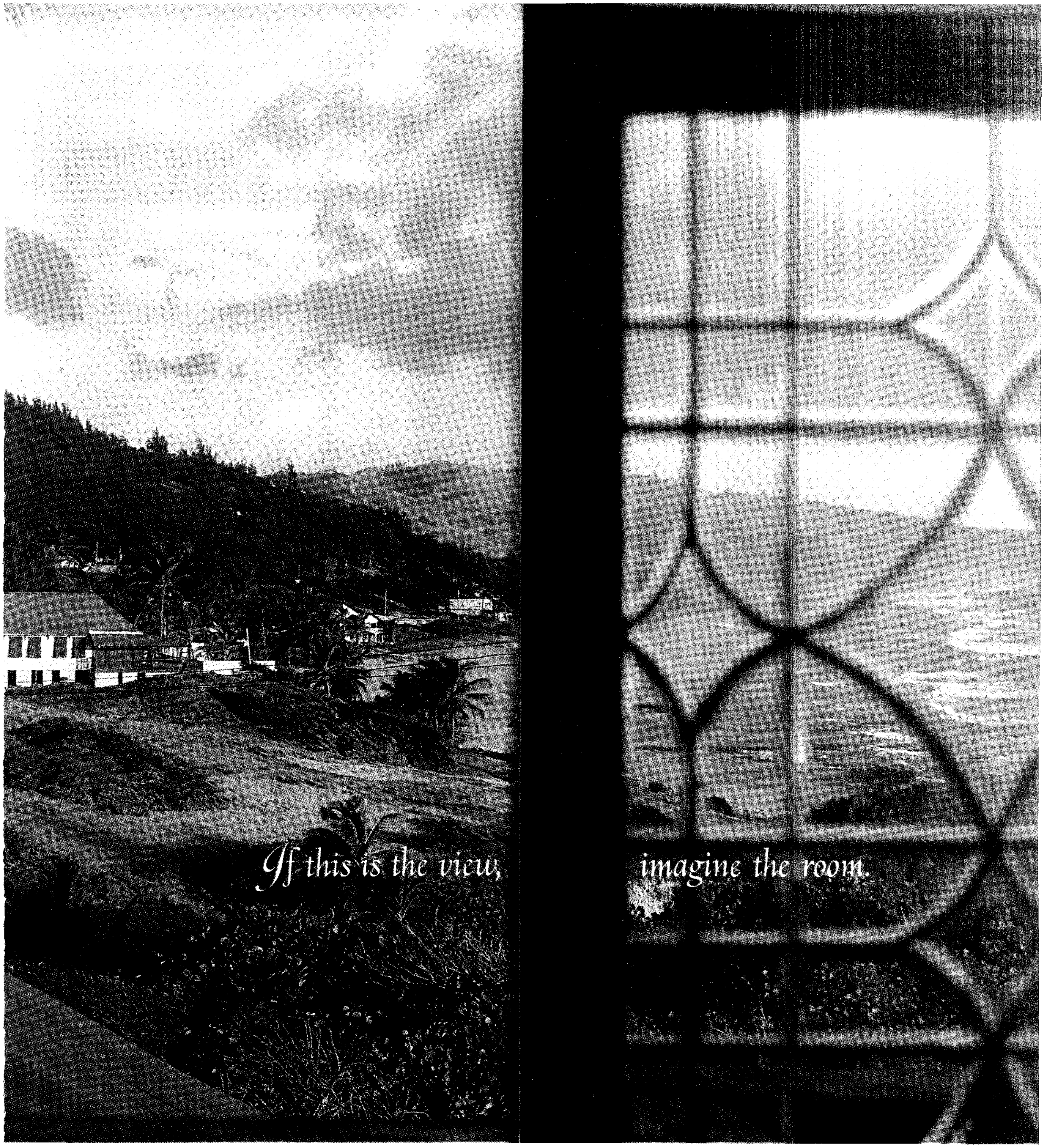
Stilt dancing on the beach



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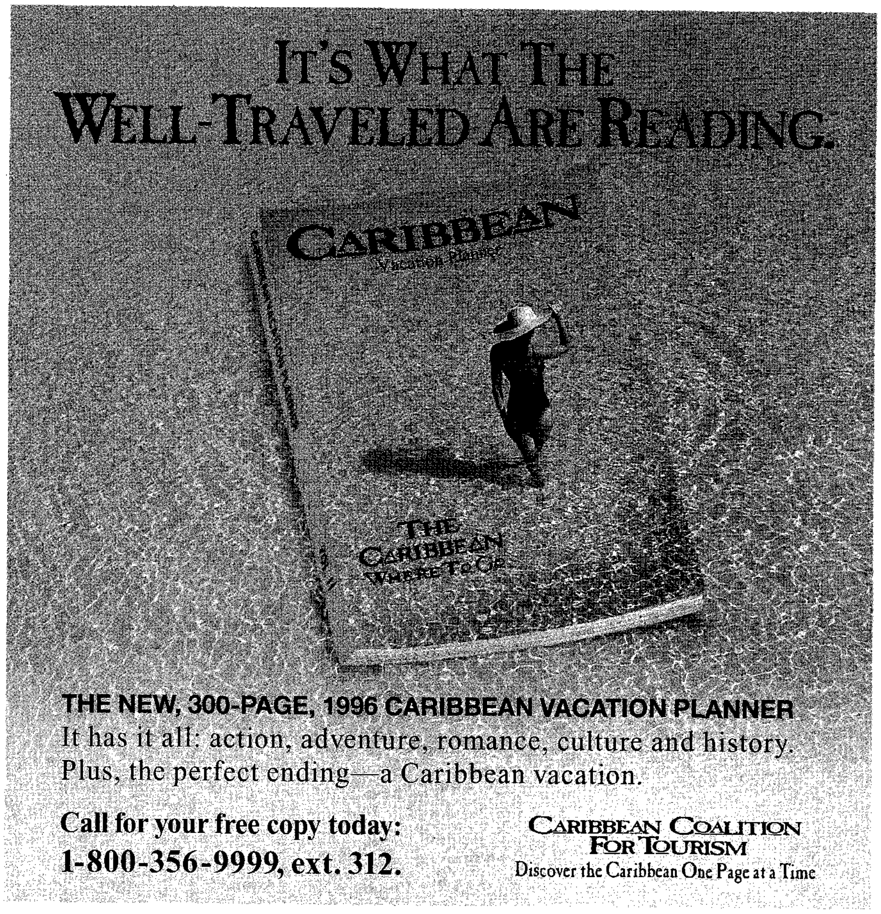
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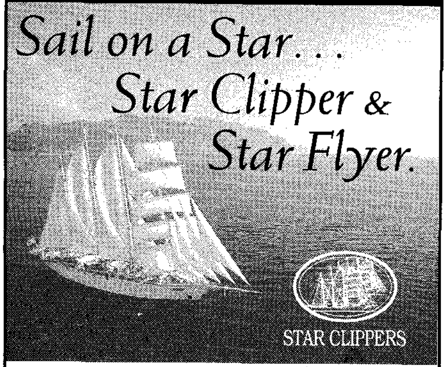

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Music lovers of all ages celebrate Carnival

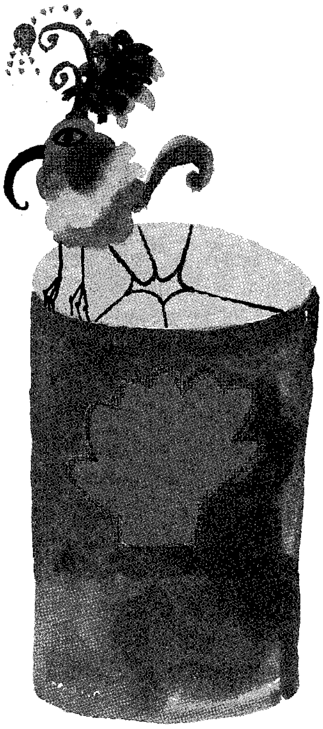
The blending of Spanish, African, and pan-Caribbean influences beautifully resonates on the island of **Puerto Rico**, where strong folk and classical traditions meet ***salsa***, a relatively new hybrid that has taken the Caribbean, and the world music scene, by storm.

Perhaps the most popular and widely recognized forms of folk music on the island are ***bomba y plena***, two different types of music that are usually grouped together and performed together due to their close association with dance. Bomba y plena shows are often presented at resort hotels along San Juan's Condado beachfront. Traditional Puerto Rican music and dance can also be enjoyed during a variety of folkloric festivals throughout the year, particularly during Carnival in the historic southern coastal city of Ponce (also home to the fascinating Museum of Puerto Rican Music).

San Juan is home to the internationally acclaimed Casals Festival, an annual event that has attracted some of the world's finest classical artists every year since 1957. (Another noteworthy classical festival takes place on St. Barts in mid-January.)

Salsa, arguably the most popular music in Puerto Rico today, actually developed within the Puerto Rican and Cuban communities of New York, drawing heavily from the musical roots of the Cuban and African-Caribbean experience and joining in the evolution of jazz and Big Band sounds in the years following WWII. The first great salsa musician was Tito Puente, who followed in the Puerto Rican tradition of classical training by attending New York's Juilliard School of Music. Highly danceable, salsa's rhythms are hot, urban, and uniquely compelling. Today, the center of salsa has shifted back to Puerto Rico, where local musicians compete with those from Cuba to play the most infectious melodies. Some of the best salsa in Puerto Rico can actually be enjoyed in San Juan's major resort hotels, many of which feature elegant nightclubs and discos.

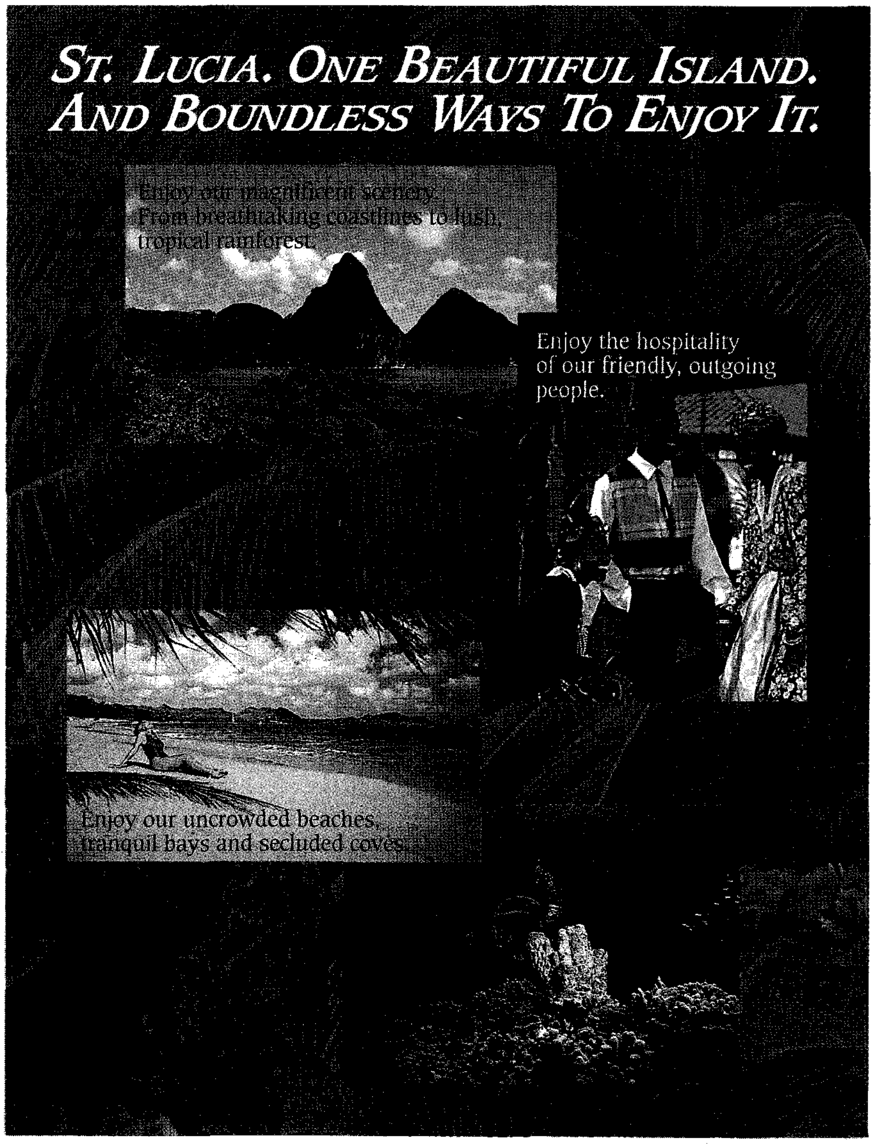
The indigenous music of the **British Virgin Islands**, known as ***fungi***, reflects the influence not only of British explorers and colonizers, but of the Spanish and Dutch buccaneers they fought to gain control of the islands, and of the slaves they took from Africa. There are currently seven active fungi bands in the BVI that play in hotels and clubs and participate in three "Fungifests" during the year; one



CARNIVAL IN THE CARIBBEAN

Although the season-long Carnival celebration in Trinidad is the longest and perhaps most definitive of these musical observances, most Caribbean countries throw a giant party called Carnival at some point in the year. Many islands throughout the Caribbean, including Aruba, Bonaire, Belize, Dominica, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Martinique, Guadeloupe, St. Martin, St. Lucia, St. Kitts, and Nevis, as well as Venezuela, and Cancun and Cozumel, Mexico observe the pre-Lent season with Carnival festivities in the beginning of the year. Other islands, including Antigua, Anguilla, Barbuda, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the British Virgin Islands, and Grenada get into the spirit of Carnival during the summer months. Traditionally, Carnival in the Caribbean features a parade of costumed musical groups and various musical performers. No matter how long the celebration lasts, these tireless musicians keep the crowds dancing, following the Carnival's golden rule: never fade.

Contact the individual tourist boards for Carnival dates. (See "For more information.")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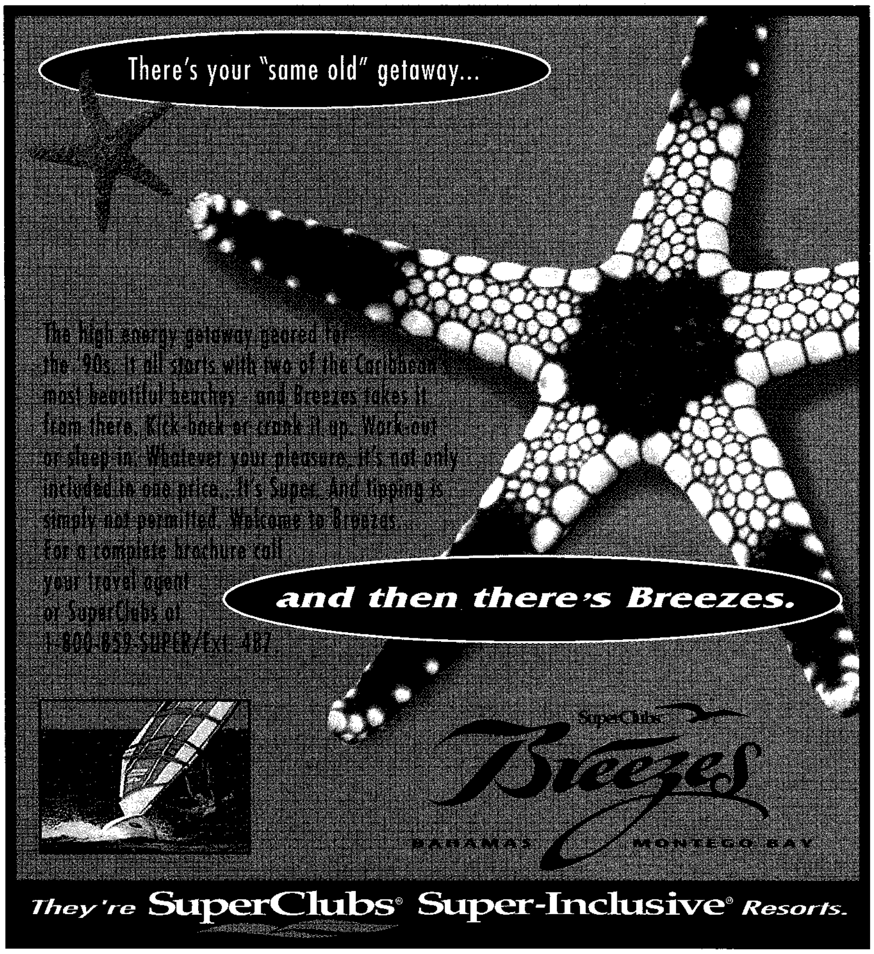

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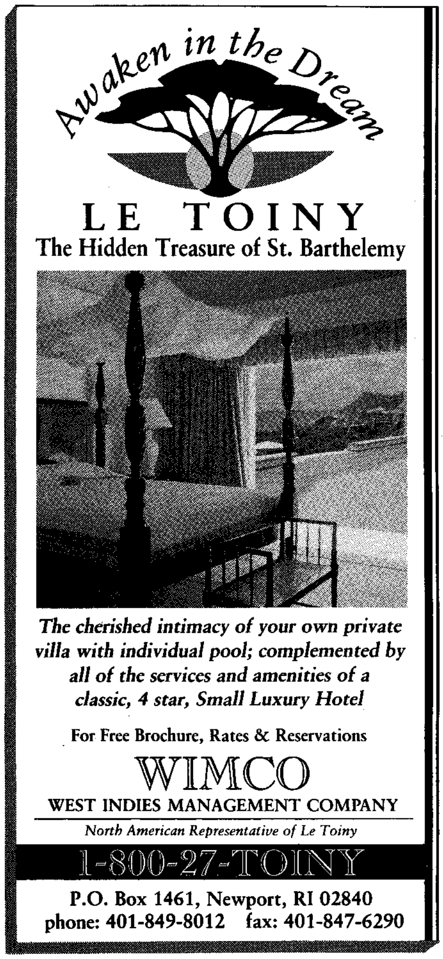

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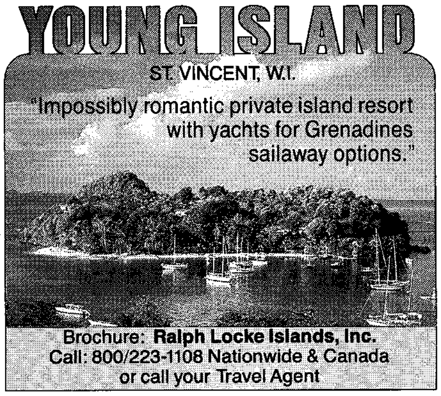

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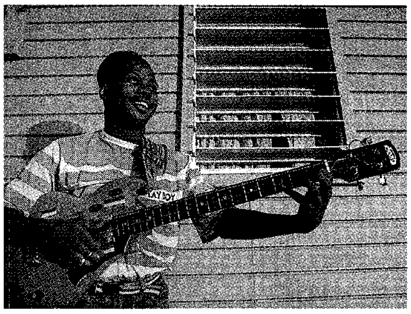


© Bob Krist, Tony Stone Images

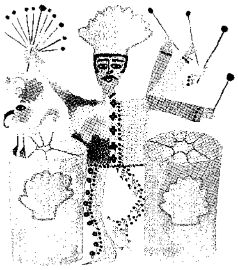
Reggae bass player in Dominica

takes place in the summer during the Emancipation Celebration and two are held during the Christmas holidays. In addition to fungi, visitors to these islands can enjoy calypso, reggae, and r&b in many local clubs. In the village of Great Harbour on Jost Van Dyke, visitors should visit Foxy's, a popular nightspot where locals enjoy calypso and soothing acoustic guitar in an idyllic setting.

Although more widely known for their outstanding dive sites, **The Cayman Islands** offer an exceptionally eclectic mix of music. Here, visitors enjoy a combination of many Caribbean styles—including Jamaican mento and reggae, Trinidadian calypso and soca, Latin-American samba, and West Indian gospel—mixed with a strong dose of American country and western.

Over the years, a number of country stars, including Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson, Charlie Pride, and Tanya Tucker have performed in the Caymans. During the past four years, Sunset House on Grand Cayman has become a favorite vacation spot for several top "new country" stars like Travis Tritt and the members of Little Texas, all certified divers who combine taping sessions for music videos with scuba vacations.

Several local bands play a mixed repertoire of rock, pop, calypso, soca, and reggae at popular spots like Silvers Night Club at the Treasure Island Resort on Seven Mile Beach. Jazz fans should look for the Gary Ebanks Jazz Quartet, appearing Friday and Saturday evenings at Grand Cayman's Safe Haven golf course and at other locations throughout the week. Jazz evenings are also held at the West Bay Polo Club and the Cayman Arms.



Announcing the First Annual Rhythms of the Caribbean Talent Search

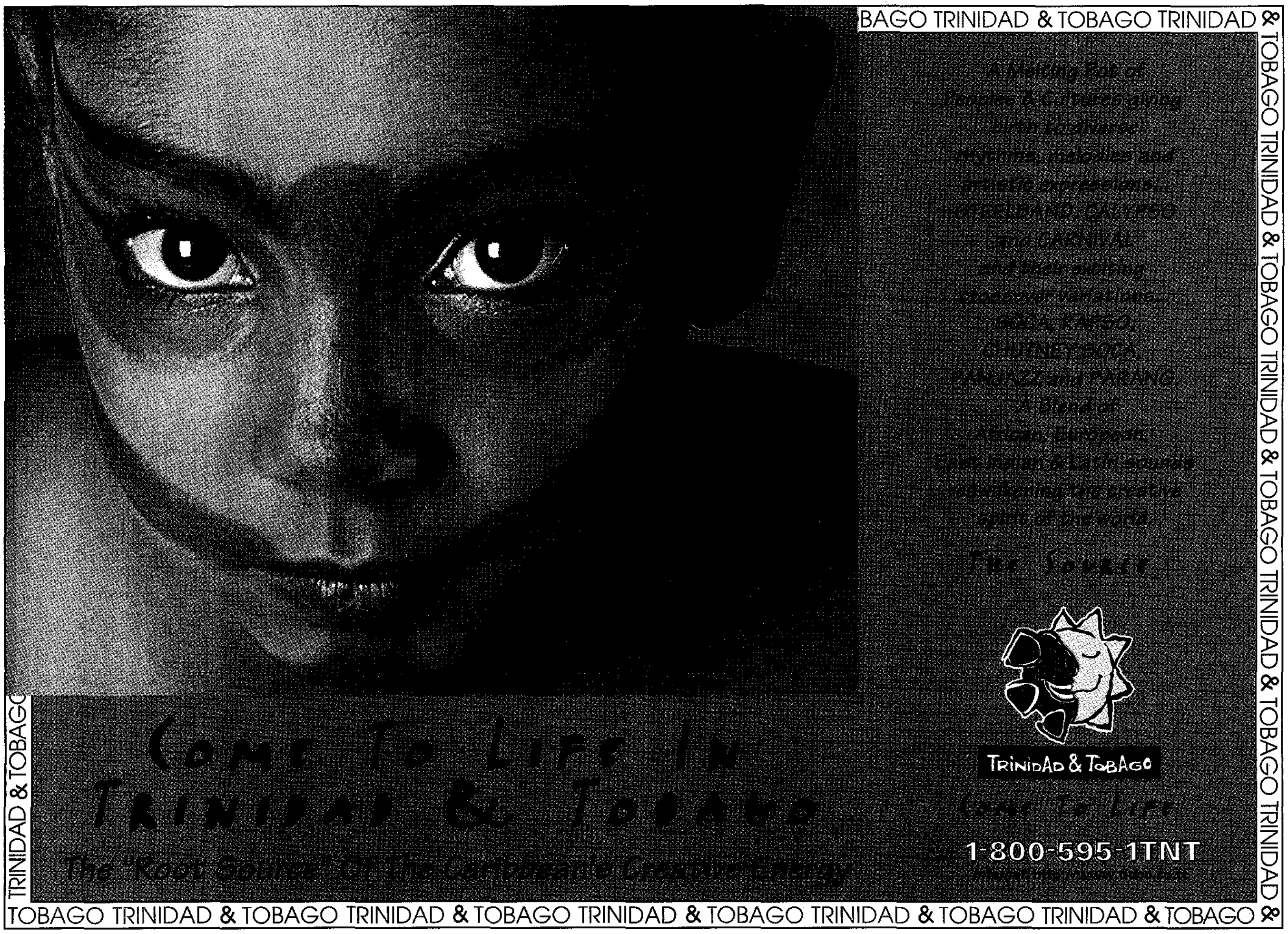
In a special effort to discover the best new Caribbean sounds, ***The New Yorker*** has joined with the **Caribbean Tourism Association**, **Island Records Jamaica**, and **British West Indies Airways** to sponsor the first annual **Rhythms of the Caribbean Pan-Caribbean Talent Search** for the best new sounds in the Caribbean. This program will seek out the best groups and solo artists in thirty Caribbean nations through local and regional music festivals, competitions, and taped auditions. Flying aboard BWIA, the official airline of the **Rhythms of the Caribbean Talent Search**, Island Jamaica's President Trish Farrell and her staff will comb many of this season's music festivals throughout the Caribbean, evaluating local talent. The winning artist(s), chosen by Island Records Jamaica, will be flown to New York to perform at the Caribbean State Ball in April 1996 and then to Barbados to perform at the 1996 CTO convention in September. Island Jamaica, whose state-of-the-art recording facility in Jamaica generates most of the Caribbean music enjoyed worldwide, will produce a professional demo recording for the winning artist or group, and one thousand singles of the song they record will be produced for promotion of the ongoing Rhythms of the Caribbean program. In November, the winner(s) will be profiled in ***The New Yorker***'s 1996 "Rhythms of the Caribbean" special advertising section.

© David Hindley

Island Jamaica recording artist Luciano

© Michael Lavine

Island Jamaica recording artist Spanner Banner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FESTIVALS

THE RHYTHMS OF THE SEASONS

In a region characterized by its perpetual summer, the seasons are marked less by changes in the weather than by cultural festivals. Audiences at these festivals are often among the first to hear the Caribbean music stars of tomorrow. This traveler's guide provides a month-by-month listing of upcoming music festivals throughout the Caribbean. Some dates are subject to change, so be sure to contact the tourism information offices listed in this section for up-to-the-minute information on these and other festivals.

1995

NOVEMBER

9th-11th—*Panjazz Festival*, **Trinidad**
22nd—*St. Cecilia's Day (Feast of the Musicians)*, Castries, **St. Lucia/ Guadeloupe**
24th-26th—*Art's Alive Festival*, **St. Thomas**
25th—*Independence Day*, **Suriname**
Month-long—*National Independence Festival of Creative Arts*, **Barbados**
November-December—*Festival of Puerto Rican Music*, Old San Juan, **Puerto Rico**

DECEMBER

1st-3rd—*Steel Band Competition*, **Saba**
1st-10th—*International Jazz Festival*, Fort-de-France, **Martinique**
15th-17th—*Carriacou Parang Festival*, **Grenada**
24th-January 2nd—*Carnival*, **Nevis/ St. Kitts**
Mid-December —*Christmas Posadas*, **Cancún & Cozumel**, **Mexico**
26th—*Boxing Day Junkanoo Parades*, **The Bahamas**
Boxing Day Parade of Costumed Bands, **Montserrat**
Start of Carnival Season, **Trinidad**
28th—*Young Saints Day* parade for children, **Guadeloupe**
29th-January 7th—*Crucian Christmas Festival*, **St. Croix, U.S.V. I.**
31st—*Reveillon de las Saint Sylvestre*, **Guadeloupe/ St. Barts/St. Martin**
Costumed Band Competitions, **Montserrat**
Year's End Celebrations
Late December
Carnival, **St. Kitts**

1996

JANUARY

Early January—*Start of Carnival Season*, **Martinique/ Guadeloupe**
1st—*Parade of Costumed Bands*, **Montserrat**
New Year's Junkanoo Parades, **The Bahamas**
New Year's Day Celebrations, Castries, **St. Lucia**
2nd—*Carnival Parade*, **Nevis/St. Kitts**
5th—*Crucian Christmas Children's Parade*, Frederiksted, **St. Croix, U.S.V.I.**
6th—*Three Kings Day*, **Cancún** & **Cozumel, Mexico**
Maroon Festival, Accompong, **Jamaica**
Three Kings Day, **Puerto Rico**
7th—*La Fête des Rois (Three Kings Day)*, **St. Martin/Martinique/Guadeloupe**
First Sunday of Carnival Season, **Guadeloupe**
7th-19th—*St. Barts Music Festival*, **St. Barts**
12th-14th—*Barbados Jazz Festival*, **Barbados**
Mid-January —*San Sebastian Street Festival*, Old San Juan, **Puerto Rico**
Month-long—*Carnival Celebrations*, **Curaçao**

FEBRUARY

Early February—
Carnival, **Bonaire**
Carnival, **Venezuela**
Start of Carnival Season, **Aruba**
Children's Festival of the Arts, **Cayman Islands**
3rd—*Tumba Festival*, **Curaçao**
6th—*Celebration of Bob Marley's 51st Birthday*, Kingston, **Jamaica**
14th-23rd—*Mashramani Calypso Competition and Parade (23rd)*, **Guyana**
18th—*Grand Carnival Parades*, **Curaçao/Aruba**
19th-20th—*Carnival Celebrations*, **Trinidad**
25th—*Carnival*, **St. Martin/Martinique/ Guadeloupe**
28th—*Mardi Gras*, **St. Martin/Martinique/ Guadeloupe**
Mid-February—
Carnival, **Dominica**
Cariacou Carnival, **Grenada**
Late February—
Carnival, **Dominica**
Carnival, Ponce, **Puerto Rico**
Carnival, Castries, **St. Lucia**
Carnival, **Cancun & Cozumel**, **Mexico**
San Pedro Carnival, **Belize**

MARCH

1st—*Ash Wednesday Parades*, **St. Martin/ Martinique**
13th—*Commonwealth Day*, **Turks and Caicos**
17th—*St. Patrick's Day Celebrations*, **Montserrat/Grenada**
Mid-March—*Sugar Harvest Festival*, **Puerto Rico**

APRIL

5th, 7th—*Good Friday and Easter Celebrations*, **Puerto Rico**
Easter Week Celebrations, **Cancun & Cozumel, Mexico**
16th-23rd—*Jamaica Carnival '96*, **Jamaica**
30th—*Coronation Day*, **Saba/St. Eustatius**
Queen's Birthday, **Curaçao, Bonaire**
Late April—*St. Mark's Day Festival*, **Grenada**

MAY

5th—*Cinco de Mayo*, **Mexico**
20th—*Steelpan Competition*, **Trinidad**
25th-28th—*11th Puerto Rico Heineken Jazzfest*, **Puerto Rico**
30th—*Anguilla Day*, **Anguilla**
Mid-May
KLM Jazz Festival, **Curaçao**
Negril Carnival, **Puerto Rico**
Late May
Gospelfest, **Barbados**
Cancún Jazz Festival, **Cancún, Mexico**
Spring Carib. Arts Festival, **British Virgin Islands**

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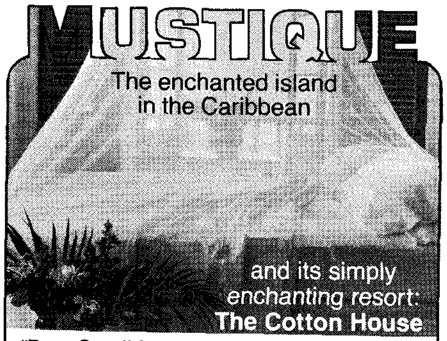

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JUNE

2nd—*Jazz à la Plantation*, Basse Pointe, **Martinique**
3rd-18th—*Casals Festival*, **Puerto Rico**
6th—*African Festival*, **St. Martin**
10th—*Queen's Birthday Celebrations*, Grand Turk, **Turks and Caicos**
24th— *Festival of St. John*, **Bonaire**
24th-July 5th— *25th Festival of Fort-de-France*, **Martinique**
Mid-June
Caribuna Carnival Festival, **Barbuda**
Caribbean Muzik Festival, **The Bahamas**
Ocho Rios Jazz Festival, **Jamaica**
Late June
Fun-in-the-Sun Festival, **Turks and Caicos**
St. John's Carnival (Parade on July 4th), **U.S.Virgin Islands**

JULY

Early July—*Festarama Festival*, **Turks and Caicos**
12th-15th—*Reggae Sunsplash International Music Festival*, Montego Bay, **Jamaica**
14th—*Bastille Day*, **St. Martin/Martinique/ Guadeloupe**
14th-August 1st—*Tobago Heritage Festival*, **Tobago**
15th-August 5th— *Crop Over Festival*, **Barbados**
20th-31st—*Steel Band Competitions*, **Trinidad and Tobago**
29th-August 8th—*Antigua Carnival*, **Antigua**
31st—*Carnival*, **St. Eustatius/Saba**
Mid July—
Rake and Scrape Festival, **Grand Turk**
Festival du Gwo Ka, **Guadeloupe**
Late July—
Statia Carnival, **St. Eustatius**
Summer Festival, **Saba**
Summer Festival, Tortola, **BVI**
Culturama, **Nevis**

AUGUST

Early August—
Arts Alive Festival, **St. Thomas**
Salsa Festival, **Curaçao**
Carnival, **Anguilla**
Reggae Sumfest, Montego Bay, **Jamaica**
5th—*Emancipation Celebration Folk Festival*, **Guyana**
7th—*Jamaica Independence Day Parade*, Kingston, **Jamaica**
24th—*Festival of St. Barthelémy*, **St. Barts**
Mid-August—*Carnival*, **Grenada**

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER

Golden Artists Music Festival, **Curaçao**
Inter-American Festival of the Arts, **Puerto Rico**
SONY World Music Festival, **The Bahamas**
St. Croix Jazz & Caribbean Music & Art Festival, **St. Croix, USVI**
7th Annual Jazz Festival, **Antigua**
Tobago Jazz Carnival, **Tobago**
International Dance Festival, **Aruba**
Pan Is Beautiful, **Trinidad**

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Antigua and Barbuda Dept. of Tourism
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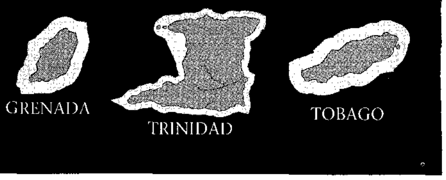


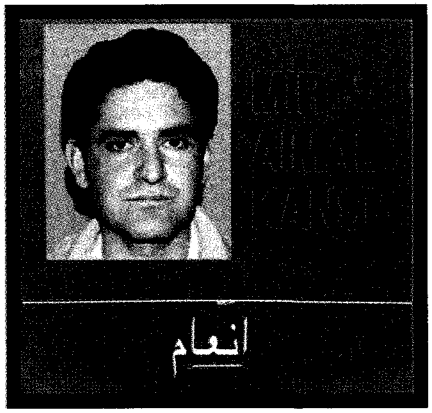
ANNALS OF COVERT ACTION

THE STRANGER

Does the C.I.A. know more about the murders of two employees outside its Virginia headquarters than it has acknowledged?

BY MARY ANNE WEAVER

THE gunman seemed so ordinary, so inconspicuous, that he would be remembered later in only the vaguest of ways: not too short but not too tall; of stocky, medium build; of a swarthy complexion that easily gave way to a burnished blush. His hair was dark brown, and his eyes were dark and expressionless. Judy Becker-Darling first glimpsed him on a January morning in 1993 as she sat with her husband, Frank Darling, in their blue Volkswagen at a congested traffic light in the prosperous Virginia suburb of McLean. They were waiting to turn in to the main entrance of the headquarters of the Central Intelligence Agency, where they both worked, and were perhaps only five hundred feet from the gate of the agency's sprawling complex of floodlights, guard boxes, and sweeping, manicured lawns. Judy, who had just turned thirty-three, had been with the agency for thirteen years, and was now a logistics officer; Frank, twenty-eight, was a communications engineer, and had spent much of his five years with the C.I.A. abroad. The couple met in Miami, where Judy had been based, and had married, after a whirlwind courtship, only three months before.



The gunman: A Pakistani national who was allegedly involved in the agency's war in Afghanistan.

COURTESY OF DIPLOMATIC SECURITY SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

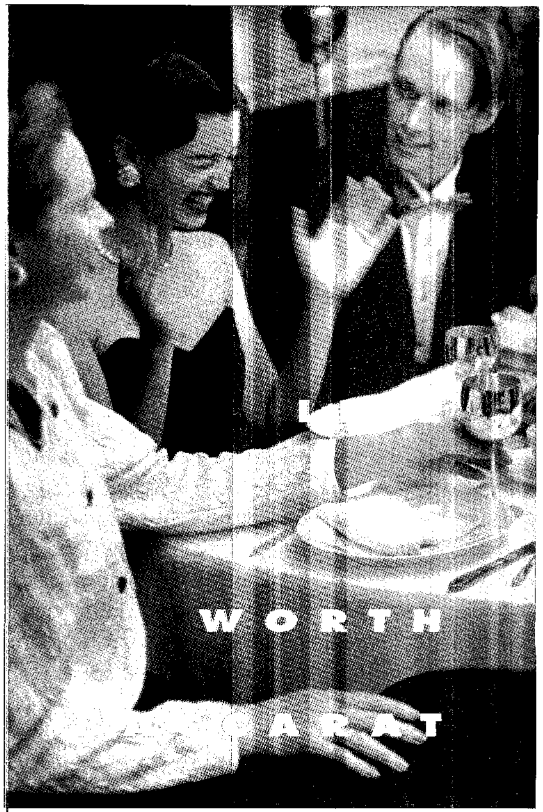
A petite woman, with short auburn-tinted hair and large hazel eyes, Judy Becker-Darling is vivacious one moment, silent and reflective the next. She is dressed in bluejeans and a red ribbed turtleneck; the only jewelry she wears is a simple gold wedding band and, around her neck, a gold chain holding her husband's wedding ring.

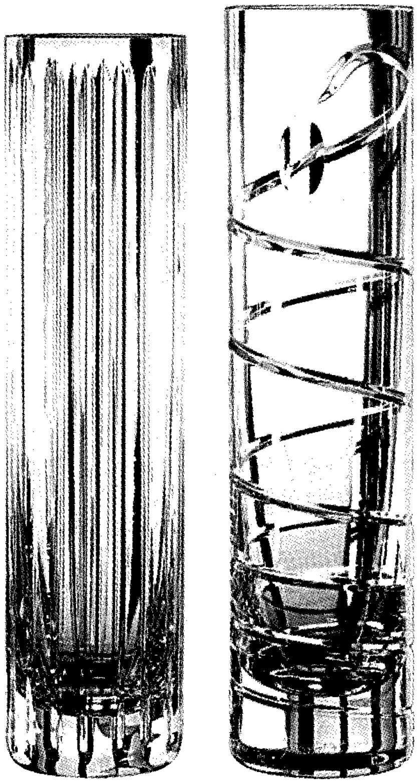
"We were talking about a new apartment that we were about to buy," she says. "We were late—it was almost eight o'clock. I was fidgety. It was all so *ordinary*. We were on our way to work!" She remembers glancing out the car window, across the divided highway, and at the lines of cars. Those in the two C.I.A. turn lanes, in front of and behind the Darlings, must have stretched for at least a mile. "Then I heard a noise. It sounded like a pop. I thought that someone had rammed our back bumper, and I turned around. Then Frank shouted, 'My God, get down, Judy! I've been shot!' "

She fell to the floor and was able to fit under the Volkswagen's dash. Frank, who had been shot in the back, clung to the steering wheel, desperately trying to maneuver their car out of the claustrophobic traffic jam.

After shooting Frank, his first victim, the assailant began running from car to car, methodically moving up one lane and down the next while spraying bullets from an AK-47 into the windows at point-blank range. Twisting from side to side between the two lanes of cars, he fired some seventy rounds in all. Glass was shattered; car horns blared; people began to scream. Judy had raised her head, and she saw the gunman, an anonymous figure dressed in brown, turn around. Then he began walking—calmly, almost casually—back toward the Darlings' car.

"All I could think of was: Please, please, run out of bullets." She watched as he aimed his AK-47 directly at the windshield of her car, and then she slid back under the dash. A barrage of gunfire followed, shattering the windows and tearing the seat apart. Frank's body





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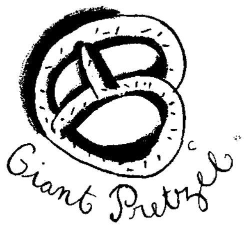
slumped forward, with bullet holes in the back, head, chest, and neck. There was a silence. Judy pulled herself toward Frank. His forehead had been shot away.

"I had never seen anyone shot before. But I knew that Frank was dead. I've often wondered why I didn't die with Frank that day. He saved my life. If I'd sat up . . . But he kept shouting at me, 'Stay down! Stay down!' "

She stops to take a sip of coffee, and looks around the lobby of the hotel, not far from the C.I.A. headquarters, where we are sitting. "The man who killed my husband had the perfect opportunity to kill me as well. He was still there when I jumped out of the car. I didn't see his face, but others told me later that for a moment he just stood there—he just stood there, with a cold, icy stare."



Covered with Frank's blood and brain matter, Judy grabbed another woman from the agency, who was standing in the middle of the highway in a state of shock, and they raced to the agency's gate, shouting to the guards, "They're killing us! They're killing us!"

Then the gunman, as suddenly as he had opened fire, jumped into a brown station wagon, which he had parked along the highway, and disappeared. In nearly three years, despite what is described as an exhaustive F.B.I. and C.I.A. manhunt for one of America's "Ten Most Wanted" men, his pursuers have never seen him again.

ALL but one of the victims were employees of the C.I.A.: an analyst, a doctor, an intelligence officer, and an engineer. The fifth was an A.T. & T. contractor who serviced the agency's facilities. Two of them died, and one was permanently disabled. All were men.

Two days after the shootings, the owner of a gun shop in Chantilly, Virginia, recognized an F.B.I. composite sketch of the assailant and matched it with his purchase records. The gunman was Mir Aimal Kansi, a twenty-eight-year-old tribesman from the Pakistani province of Balochistan. For reasons that are unexplained, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms did not officially identify Kansi until ten more days had passed. Meanwhile, on the evening of January 26th, Mir Aimal Kansi quietly boarded a plane in New York and returned to Pakistan; landing in the commercial hub of Karachi, he took a connecting flight to Quetta, the provincial capital of Balochistan, where he arrived more than twenty-four hours after his picture had been identified. Exactly a month later, on February 26, 1993, the World Trade Center bombing occurred in New York, and another Pakistani from Balochistan, who subsequently became known to the world by the name Ramzi Ahmed Yousef, and was alleged to be the mastermind of that attack, boarded the same Pakistan International Airlines flight that Kansi had; flew to Karachi; and took, like Kansi, the connecting flight to Quetta, Balochistan.

Frustrated American investigators have been attempting to determine what links, if any, exist between the two men, and also between Mir Aimal Kansi's apparent outburst of rage outside C.I.A. headquarters in 1993 and an almost identical ambush of three American Consulate officials—one a communications expert from the C.I.A.—in Karachi this March: the van in which they were being ferried to work was attacked as it stopped for a traffic light on one of Karachi's busiest boulevards; four masked men jumped out of a stolen cab and sprayed the van with Kalashnikov fire; and then, just as suddenly as Kansi had, they disappeared.

"I often wonder if they've ever really tried to find Kansi," Judy Becker-Darling says, her eyes filling with tears. "I can't let go of this until they do. I live it every single day. For two years, I've tried to get answers, and the C.I.A. keeps sweeping it under the rug, as though it never happened! They won't tell me who Kansi is. They've done an in-house investigation, which they won't share with us. We've had to fight for every single thing we've gotten from them—everything from the tiniest little detail, like a star on the agency's wall for Frank and for Lansing Bennett, the physician who was killed." (Fifty-five stars are chiselled into the marble wall of the agency's entryway. They represent C.I.A. agents killed on duty in declared or undeclared wars. Not all are named; some identities remain secret, with anonymous stars.)

Judy Becker-Darling's voice is full of energy, and a torrent of words spills out: "The agency"—from which she resigned a year ago—"keeps telling me I should be quiet, and has criticized me for making such a public fuss. The agency is a family, they say, and we look out for each other. But what have they done for me? My husband is splattered all over me, all over the car, and I'm not supposed to be affected? Nothing was cleaned up in our car. Frank's briefcase, my gym bag, Frank's lunch—they were all still in the car, covered with blood, two weeks later, when the car was returned to me. But the C.I.A. took every credential we ever owned—our badges, all our awards. It went through our office desks and, inexplicably, took everything. Thirteen years I worked there, and only some pictures and a coffee cup came back!"

Judy has channelled her energy, her anger, and her grief into trying to discover why Frank was killed, and into a drive to ban assault weapons. Travelling across Pennsylvania, where she now lives, and to Washington and back, she has been telling congressional committees and public gatherings just how easy it was for an immigrant drifter, from a strange, remote tribal region some seven thousand miles away, to buy an arsenal of weapons, ammunition, and a bulletproof vest in Virginia and North Carolina, and then to use them at the very gate of the citadel of espionage with such deadly effect.

For two years, she has attempted to open a congressional investigation into Frank's death. Only now has she met with some success. Senator Arlen Specter, Republican of Pennsylvania, who chairs the Select Committee on Intelligence, has opened a discreet inquiry among the agencies charged with investigating the seemingly lone gunman, Mir Aimal Kansi, who, according to investigators, has travelled on at least three passports, and under at least six aliases, during the past four years. Depending upon Specter's findings, congressional hearings could be held later this year.

"Did Kansi know my husband?" Judy wonders aloud.

The question, at least outside the C.I.A., remains unanswerable. The efforts of other investigators have thus been hampered by the fact that, according to Robert F. Horan, Jr., the chief prosecutor of Fairfax County, Kansi "truly was and is a mystery man. You meet yourself coming back every time on him." Nevertheless, there are suggestions that Kansi and Darling may have had more in common than it would appear. Two other key questions, nearly three years after Frank Darling died, are whether the C.I.A. is stonewalling about some very curious circumstances involving the murder of three of its employees and the at-

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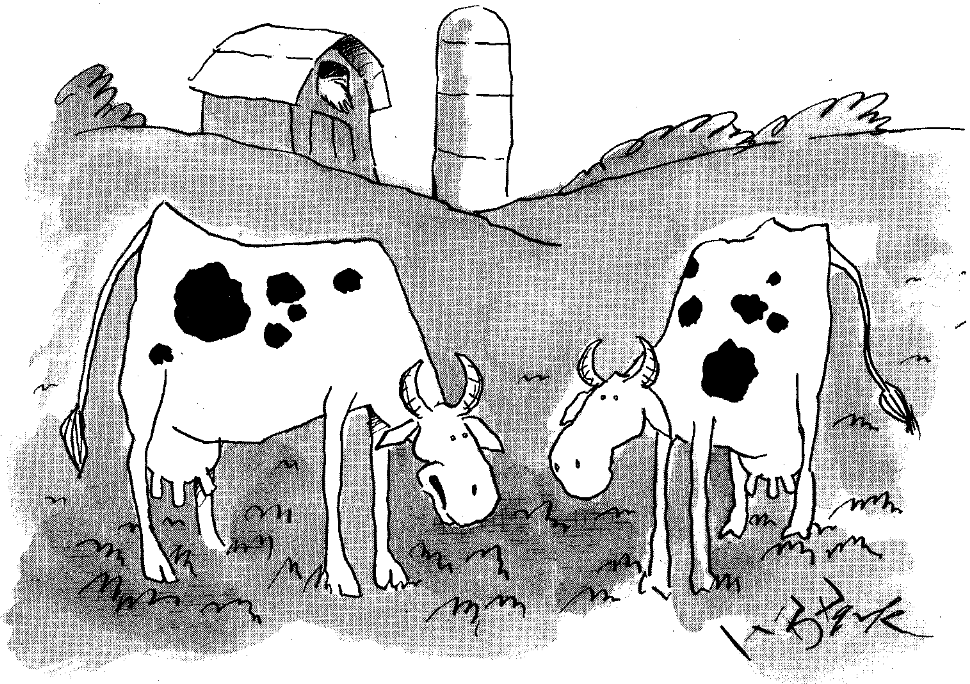

"In the final analysis, it's all cud."

• •

tempted murder of three more, and, just as important, whether it is holding back information on how Kansi may have fit into the C.I.A.-sponsored "jihad," or holy war, against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan—a war that the agency funded lavishly from 1980 until 1989 and then appeared to turn its back on. Today, the C.I.A. may be experiencing the consequences of that undertaking.

The C.I.A. publicly denies any connection between itself and Kansi, and has told Judy Becker-Darling and the press that after an "exhaustive search" of its files it is quite certain that Kansi never worked for it. Its disclaimer has been challenged privately by officials of two Pakistani governments—that of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and that of her predecessor, Nawaz Sharif—and it has certainly been challenged by Balochistan's powerful tribal chiefs.

SQUEEZED into the triangle where Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan meet, Balochistan is a rugged, lawless sort of place, riven by violence and rich in political intrigue; it has been a battleground for imperial armies and tribal warlords for centuries. Its ordered chaos is presided over by seventeen major tribes that make up two major ethnic groups, the Pathans, in the north, and the Baloch, in the south, led by irascible chiefs.

Only in 1979 did the province assume significance for the United States, when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, to Balochistan's north, in order to prop up that country's pro-Communist government. Our government responded by launching what became Washington's largest covert-action program since the Vietnam years, and Balochistan was transformed. It became a key staging area for the Afghan resistance forces fighting the C.I.A.'s jihad. All told, the C.I.A. invested more than three billion dollars in the feuding mujahideen groups, channelling all its weapons and funds through Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence, or I.S.I., whose powers proved formidable during the war, and whose generals, part of a martial-law government, politicized the I.S.I. as it had never been politicized before. One Pakistani government official told me during a visit this spring that some twenty thousand Pakistanis—including thousands of tribesmen from Balochistan—were enlisted by the I.S.I. in support of the jihad. Some were known to the sixty or so officers from the C.I.A. and the Special Forces who were overseeing the war, but most of them were not; little accountability was provided by the I.S.I. But there was little doubt that Balochistan flourished on the C.I.A.'s last battleground of the Cold War.

The agency used the tribesmen as guides and scouts, as drivers and trackers, and for logistical support. Some secured precipitous mountain passes on the Afghan frontier for weapons transport; others crossed the border to collect intelligence; still others, under the cover of the C.I.A., smuggled arms and drugs. Nearly everyone in the province, whose population is only four and a half million, was in one way or another affected by the jihad. Mir Aimal Kansi was almost certainly no exception.

He was born in Quetta, in February of 1964, the only child of a Pathan tribal *malik*—or notable—Abdullah Jan Kansi, and his second wife. At an early age, he was indoctrinated in the ancient codes and rituals of the Pathans, a warlike grouping of tribes who inhabit the wild mountain country where Pakistan and Afghanistan meet, and whose severe code of honor requires that revenge be exacted for a wrong even if a generation has passed.

Mir Aimal enjoyed a privileged life, for while he was growing up his family became one of Quetta's most prosperous and politically prominent. But unlike Balochistan's major tribes, the Kansis—who were among those favored by the British during the days of the Raj, and were consequently better educated and more represented in government service than most—were never one of the martial tribes. They are small in number—perhaps fifteen hundred in all—and, unlike the major tribes, have no private army. In fact, one senior tribal leader told me that in his view the Kansis really weren't a tribe at all but merely a clan, whose leverage and strength were grounded primarily in their political influence—and in their connections with Pakistani intelligence.

By all accounts, Mir Aimal was doted upon by his father, a building contractor and businessman, and at an early age he was clearly being groomed by Abdullah Jan to become his business and political heir. When the boy was six, his father enrolled him in Quetta's most élite private school; when he was eight, in the aftermath of a dispute with one of his teachers, Mir Aimal, assisted by the family servants, burned the school down. Yet, because of Balochistan's strict tribal code—and the Pathans' even harsher code of honor and revenge—none of his classmates ever betrayed him to the school authorities. Abdullah Jan was ir-

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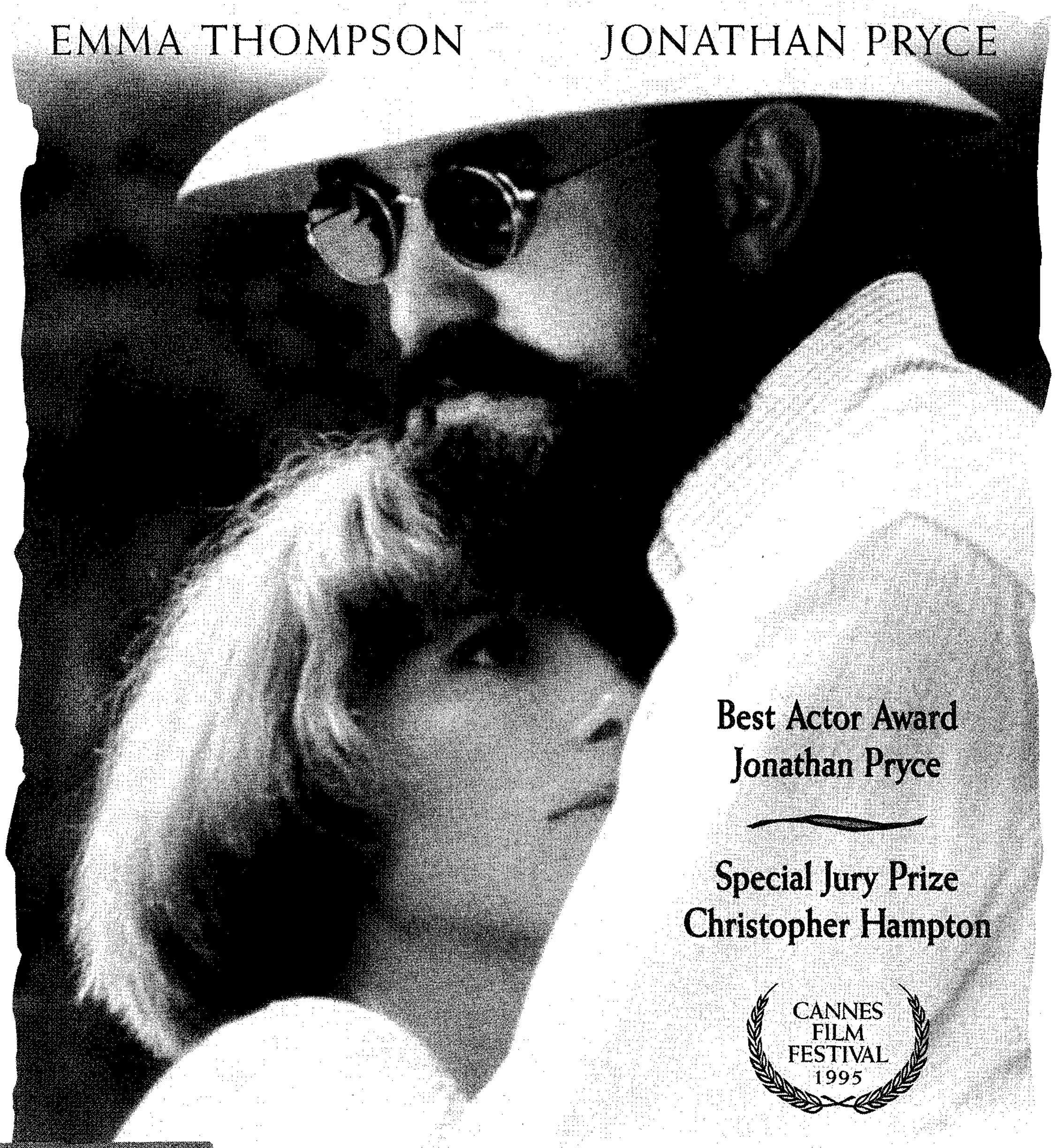

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ritated when he learned what Mir Aimal had done, but one of his friends says that the father secretly admired his eight-year-old's precocity and resourcefulness.

In 1980, when the jihad began, Mir Aimal was sixteen, and friends of his recall that, like many of his classmates, he grew fond of carrying an AK-47 to school. As he moved between his classroom and his family's walled compound, and between two hotels owned by Abdullah Jan, which were used often as rendezvous points for I.S.I. officers and Afghan fighters during the jihad, the teenage Mir Aimal would have found it nearly impossible to escape the war. For a decade, hundreds of Islamic militants and thousands of mujahideen came through Quetta on their way to and from the jihad; unprecedented amounts of money, arms, and equipment were transferred; the drug trade thrived; mullahs exhorted the faithful to fight. The I.S.I. generals—largely committed Islamists—and their C.I.A. counterparts were exceedingly pleased. But no one was happier with Balochistan's new prosperity than the tribal chiefs, even though their political feelings were largely anti-American.

Abdullah Jan's businesses expanded, and in 1983 he sent Mir Aimal to Quetta's University of Balochistan. There he studied English literature (he received a master's degree in 1989); joined a militant nationalist movement of the Pathans; and dabbled in activities that, considering the times, were rather mild, such as participating in Pathan student demonstrations and burning the American flag. Like his father, Mir Aimal championed the cause of a "greater Pakhtunistan"—a somewhat hazy but politically explosive call to reunite Pakistan's and Afghanistan's Pathan tribes. Abdullah Jan was a heavy financial backer of Pathan politicians who supported the call, many of whom—like the tribal chiefs (and the C.I.A.-sponsored Afghan resistance leaders themselves)—had long histories of being anti-American.

"Was Mir Aimal anti-American?" I asked one of his friends.

He thought for a moment, and then he said, "Sometimes he was, but basically he was weird."

Those who know Kansi describe him variously as shy and gentle, angry and bitter, and a tangle of contradictions: a political demonstrator who seemed apathetic about politics; a born-again Muslim who seemed casual about Islam; the heir to a political fortune who came to the United States and slept on Pakistani immigrants' floors. One phrase that most frequently came to mind when people who knew Kansi were asked about him was that he, like Ramzi Yousef, of the World Trade Center bombing, was "one of the children of the C.I.A.'s jihad."

Exactly when Abdullah Jan's intelligence connections began is a matter of dispute. Some investigators say that they were long-standing, and others that they were only marginal before the jihad; but all agree that they flourished during that war. Pakistani officials who are attempting to piece together the multifarious aspects of Mir Aimal Kansi's life say that Abdullah Jan, at least one of his cousins, and two of his sons, including Mir Aimal, were an integral part of the C.I.A.-I.S.I. weapons pipeline to the mujahideen, assisting in the transport of arms and in securing the routes out of Quetta and north through the border towns of Pishin and Chaman, and on across the rugged, often snowcapped Toba Kakar mountain range, using little-known passes and unmarked trails controlled by the Pathan tribes, who spill across the border into southern Afghanistan.

I asked one of Balochistan's tribal chiefs, a man I have known for a number of years and found trustworthy, and who is close to the Kansi clan, about Abdullah Jan. "Malik Abdullah was a good friend of mine, but he sold his soul to the Devil," he said. "The C.I.A.—he worked for them quite openly for most of his adult life. Everyone knew about it—it certainly wasn't a secret here. He would never tell me exactly what he did, but I personally know at least three tribal chiefs—quite minor ones, I must say—whom Malik Abdullah paid handsomely to secure their allegiance to the United States. It's well known among his friends that many of his businesses were set up by the C.I.A., and it's generally assumed that the agency used them from time to time as fronts. Oh, he received a lot of goodies over the years, including the pledge that his son would take his place when he retired."

"Which son?"

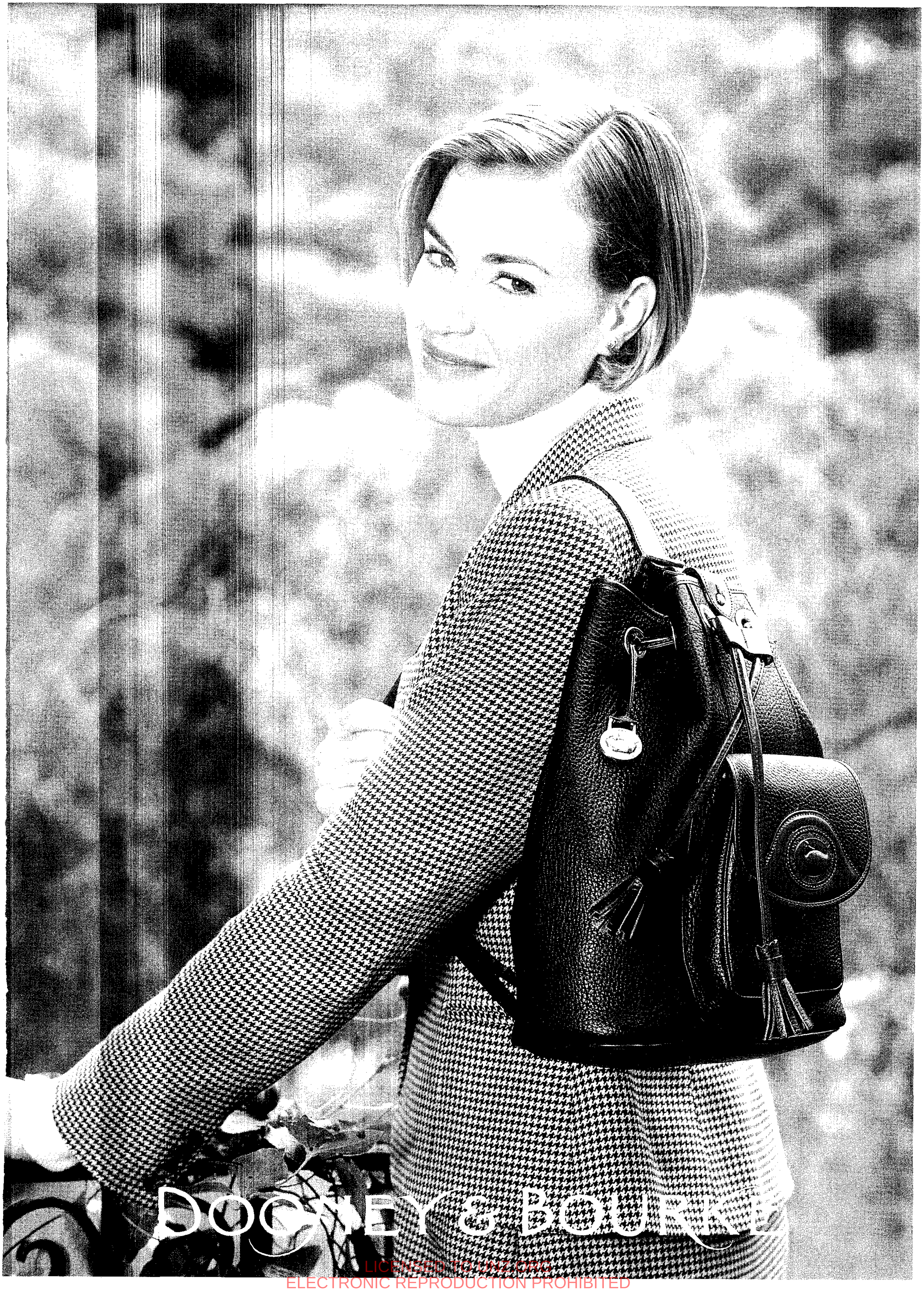
"Young Aimal."

When I asked a United States intelligence official what he thought about that, he answered "Bullshit." He then went on to say that Abdullah Jan *really* worked for the I.S.I. "Sure the agency was in contact with him. Absolutely," he said. "But he wasn't on our payroll, he was on *theirs!*"—a rather moot distinction, considering that the I.S.I.'s jihad activities were underwritten by the C.I.A.

MIR AIMAL KANSI underwent profound changes in 1989, when his father died of a heart attack. He became increasingly impetuous and restless, his half brothers say, and, although he had not sought employment after receiving his master's degree, he adopted an even more unsettled life style, disappearing for long periods at a time. Then, in the fall of 1990, several months after the C.I.A. closed down its pipeline to the Afghan mujahideen, he abruptly announced that he was going to Germany. "It was all very mysterious," the Fairfax prosecutor Robert Horan recalls. "He stayed in Germany for between three and six months, returning to Pakistan in the winter of 1990-91. Then—boom!—off to the United States in March. One of the great mysteries of my life is: Why in God's name did the wealthy son of a Pakistani tribal chief head directly for Herndon, Virginia, a nice, quiet little rural town? It's an odd place for someone to head. Its only significance is that it's five minutes from Dulles Airport." It is also perhaps fifteen minutes from the C.I.A.

Kansi had entered the United States without being interviewed by the Immigration and Naturalization Service—something that the I.N.S. claims could only have occurred if he had been sponsored by an official agency of the United States government. However that may be, for the next year Kansi's life seemed unremarkable: he drifted around the Virginia suburbs, taking odd jobs from time to time, as a courier, a mover, a gas-station attendant, all the while staying at various friends' apartments—all of them near the C.I.A. He may have travelled back and forth to Pakistan during that time, on one of the three passports he is known to have had.

Then, in 1992, Kansi's apparent inertia gave way to spurts of energy. He ap-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plied for political asylum in the United States, claiming, without explanation, that he would be prosecuted or killed if he returned home; travelled to North Carolina at least once, perhaps twice, to meet with a delegation from Pakistan's radical Tablighi Jama'at, an organization—to which Kansi has been frequently linked—of Islamic zealots. Fashioned by the I.S.I. during the jihad years, ostensibly to do missionary work, Tablighi nevertheless sent eager recruits off to fight in the jihad, primarily with one of the most virulently anti-American groups. One of its most prominent voices is that of a former I.S.I. director, retired Lieutenant General Javed Nasir, whose activities in support of the "international jihad" brought Pakistan dangerously close to being declared a terrorist state by Washington two years ago. (The General is now reportedly being questioned in connection with the arrest of forty Pakistani Army officers, including a number of his followers, a few weeks ago on suspicion that they are linked to an international network of Islamic fundamentalists, and may have been plotting to overthrow Benazir Bhutto's government.)

Shortly after returning from North Carolina, in the summer of 1992, Kansi moved into an apartment in Reston, Virginia, less than a mile from the garden apartment where Frank and Judy Becker-Darling lived, and sought his first steady job—with Excel Courier, Inc., which is one of only a handful of companies cleared to make deliveries to the C.I.A. Excel is owned by Chris Marchetti, the son of Victor Marchetti, who was a senior official at the C.I.A. in 1969, when he resigned in protest over some of its covert-action programs; he has since become one of its harshest foes. The younger Marchetti told me that, as far as he could recall, Kansi was not cleared to make deliveries to the C.I.A.; other Excel drivers told me that Kansi had nevertheless, through them, become familiar with the procedures and routes.

Fifteen days before the shootings in front of the C.I.A., Kansi began to prepare. Between January 10th and January 22nd, he visited David Condon Inc.—the shop in Chantilly that was later visited by the A.T.F.—at least four times, buying ammunition, two handguns, and a Colt AR-15 assault rifle, which he later exchanged for the AK-47 that was used in the attack. With the credit card of his roommate, Zahed Ahmad Mir, who, on occasion, accompanied him on his gun-buying trips, Kansi ordered a bulletproof vest by mail from a North Carolina shop.

Mir—who was never implicated in the C.I.A. killings—later told investigators that Kansi had said he was outraged by the treatment of Muslims in Bosnia, and wanted to "make a big statement, by shooting up the White House, the Israeli Embassy, or the C.I.A.," according to Prosecutor Horan. (The Bosnian connection has been given little credence by most investigators, I learned.)

"Mir Aimal Kansi came to this country with one mission—to kill C.I.A. employees," a U.S. counterterrorism expert who has worked closely on the case told me in Washington. "What we don't know is why. It could be related to the jihad. It could be related to drugs; there is certainly a connection between the Kansis and the drug barons—it goes with the territory there. And then again it could be related to Kansi's uncle's death." In June of 1984, Malik Gul Hasan Kansi, a legislator and adviser to Pakistan's then military ruler, General Mohammed Zia ul-Haq, was killed in Quetta when his car was ambushed. And, although the martial-law regime of the time described the killing as the result of a family dispute—as it was inclined to describe many political assassinations—the death of Kansi's uncle was generally seen as being connected to his own intelligence work and to his jihad activities gone awry; there was a widespread belief that he was killed—perhaps with the C.I.A.'s knowledge—by the I.S.I. "This was a very personal thing Mir Aimal did, and it seems very closely tied to the Pathan code of revenge," the counterterrorism expert said. "I'm absolutely convinced that one or more people close to Kansi died, and he holds the C.I.A. responsible for their deaths. He came directly to the gate of the C.I.A. He was sending us a message. And I truly believe that, in his mind, he thinks we should know why he did what he did."

Victor Marchetti, the former senior C.I.A. official whose son employed Kansi, agrees: "I'm operating on the hypothesis that Kansi had a grudge. Or that he was on a mission to send a message

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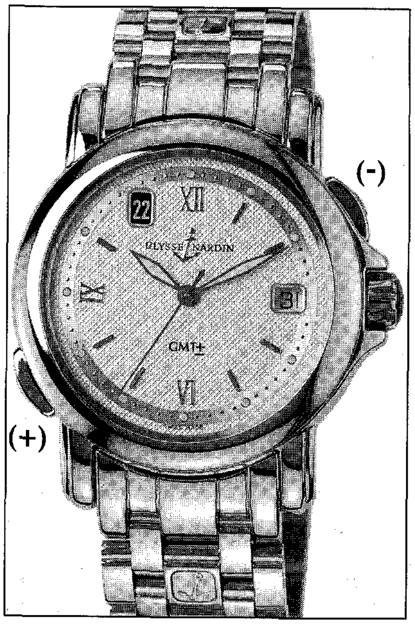

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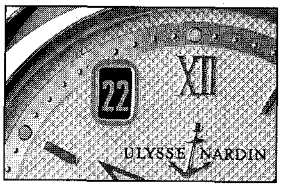

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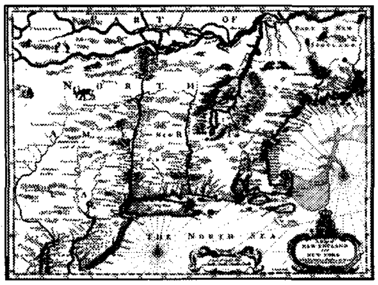

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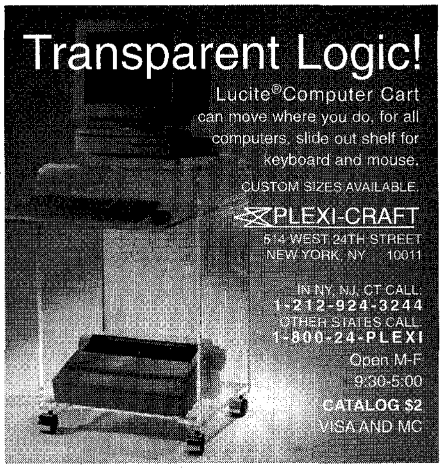

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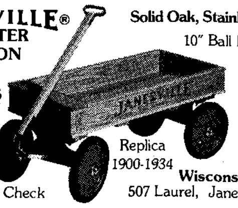

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to the C.I.A. from someone. He comes from a country where the agency has been involved since the beginning of time. One of our oldest intelligence-sharing programs is with Pakistan, and we did some pretty dirty things together in Afghanistan."

Not everyone believed that the F.B.I. and the C.I.A. were doing all they could to apprehend Kansi, I said, and he replied, "That is precisely what most intrigues me about this case—the minimal way that the F.B.I. has investigated it. Why haven't they talked to the other drivers at Chris's company who knew Kansi well? Why haven't they talked to me? Are they covering up for the C.I.A., or are they simply out of their league? They talked to Chris only twice, briefly, and didn't seem that concerned. One of Kansi's friends in Herndon received a letter from him, some time back, saying that he owed him money. He even gave him an *address* in Pakistan to which the money should be sent. The friend called the F.B.I. and told them about it, but the F.B.I. never called back."

"Does this have the earmarks of a C.I.A. coverup?" I asked.

He replied, without answering directly, "The C.I.A.'s history is replete with stonewalling and coverups. The cardinal rule of covert action has always been deniability. You protect the agency, and the agency's hand, as your first line of defense, and then you've got to protect the President. I reviewed 'high-risk operations' for the White House for a number of years, and one of our key priorities always was: If it goes wrong, how can we cover up?" Then he added, almost as an afterthought, "In the secret business of intelligence, which is a wilderness of mirrors, anything is possible."

AMONG the enigmas that the C.I.A. and the F.B.I. have not unravelled since Frank Darling and Lansing Bennett died is whether Mir Aimal Kansi simply came to Herndon, Virginia, or was sent there; whether any of his five victims were specifically targeted by a professional gunman, trying to make it appear a random act; and whether there are any connections between Kansi and Ramzi Yousef, the alleged mastermind of the World Trade Center bombing, who was arrested in Pakistan in February and is now awaiting trial in New York; and whether there are connections between the almost identical ambushes outside the C.I.A. in 1993 and in Karachi this spring. There are tantalizing hints that there could be.

Both Yousef—whose real name is Abdul Basit Mahmud Abdul Karim—and Kansi are from Balochistan; both came of age on the C.I.A.'s jihad battlefield; both entered and left the United States by the same routes; and both shared an alias—Mohammed Alam. Both lived quite openly in Pakistan, despite allegedly exhaustive manhunts for two of America's "Ten Most Wanted" men. Over the past two years, agents from the C.I.A. and the F.B.I. have conducted a series of abortive, sometimes farcical raids in Quetta and Peshawar in attempts to capture them, but Kansi—like Yousef until earlier this year—has always been alerted in advance, and, like Yousef, has quietly slipped across the border into Afghanistan. According to Pakistani intelligence sources, in the spring of 1993 both men, along with Muhammad Islambouli, a key Egyptian aide to Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman—who was just convicted of "waging a war of urban terrorism against the United States"—were sighted in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, at a military training camp of one of the most stridently anti-Western and fundamentalist leaders of the Afghan jihad, Professor Abdurrab Rasul Sayyaf. The sources caution that this could be a coincidence; or it could not.

Blending into the tribal fabric, and into the general anarchy of Afghanistan's ongoing civil war, Kansi has also been linked, from time to time, with another Afghan resistance group, led by the fanatically anti-American Gulbadin Hekmatyar, who was a particular favorite of the I.S.I.—and of the Tablighi Jama'at—during the jihad and, as a consequence, received roughly fifty per cent of the arms that the C.I.A. supplied to it.

As for the likelihood of a connection between the attacks in Karachi and outside the headquarters of the C.I.A., Karachi is considered to be the most anarchic city on the Indian subcontinent, and the list of possible suspects in that attack was long. But the prevailing view among investigators is that the ambush of the three American Consulate officials on their way to work was in retribution for Ramzi Yousef's extradition to the United States, and had been organized and planned by a militant underground Islamic group in Karachi, or in

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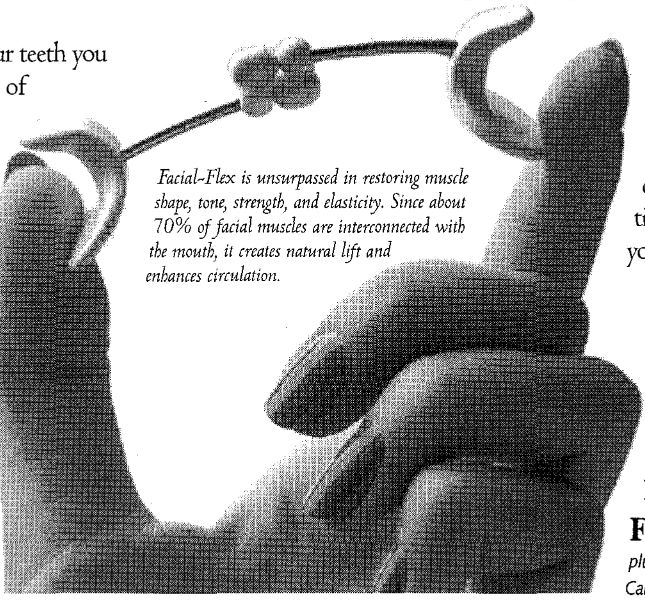

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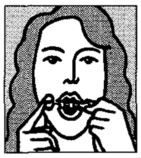

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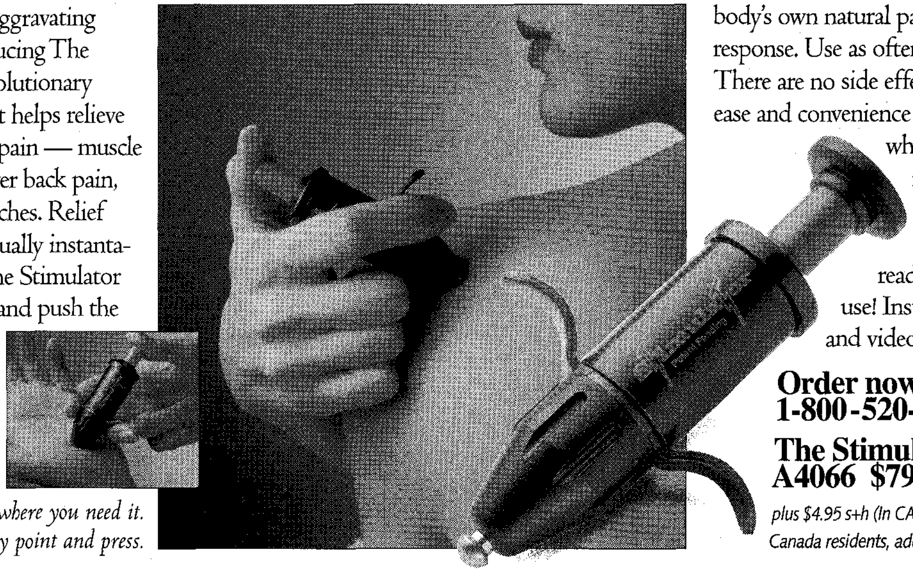

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Balochistan. Mir Aimal Kansi and also Ramzi Yousef's father are among several suspects.

Judy Becker-Darling's question as to whether Kansi knew her husband cannot be easily dismissed. Frank Darling was a communications engineer, operating under cover of the Department of State, who travelled frequently to Pakistan, including Karachi, in 1987 and 1988—the height of the jihad—from his base in Athens, Greece; Gary Durell, killed two years after Frank, in the Karachi attack, was also a C.I.A. communications engineer operating under cover of the Department of State but based in Karachi. And it is from the C.I.A. station in Karachi that the agency monitors Balochistan.

Of the eight Americans—all but two from the C.I.A.—killed or wounded in the Virginia and Karachi attacks, the two men who seem to have been deliberately fired upon were Darling and Durell; in both cases, the gunmen returned to the victims' vehicles—the Darlings' car, Durell's side of the Consulate van—to make certain, before disappearing, that the young C.I.A. communications experts were dead.

SHAME

If I lived in Peckwater
  Quad a thousand years, tended by
scouts and bedders
  in luxury of service undiminished
by the need to walk
  half a mile to a bathtub, I wouldn't
comprehend the interclass
  manners of Oxford. The servant
for the JCR
  at the House—a lean bespectacled man
of some years who wore
  black, never smiled, and carried a dozen
teacups without
  permitting any to rattle—called himself
Arthur Hall. Idly,
  I mentioned that my father's brother bore
the same appellation,
  then watched in horror as color drained
from the already gray
  obsequious face of Arthur Hall,
who mumbled his
  sincere gratitude for my condescension
and fled to his pantry
  where he stayed, trembling, rattling saucers.

—Donald Hall

On the northern tier of Pakistan today, Mir Aimal Kansi, using a portfolio of disguises and pseudonyms, appears to move with ease, travelling between Quetta and southern Afghanistan—sometimes protected by the Pathan tribes, sometimes by the drug barons—in a circle of a few hundred square miles, crossing through the same mountain passes, and over the same little-known tribal trails, through which Abdullah Jan's convoys passed during the jihad years.

United States government sources argue that Kansi has an advantage that Ramzi Yousef didn't enjoy at the time of his arrest: a tribal structure that protects him, and has proved impossible for U.S. investigators to penetrate. But, according to Pakistani sources, the U.S. government has never expended the same amount of manpower, enthusiasm, or time in investigating or attempting to apprehend Mir Aimal Kansi as it did in tracking down Yousef. In fact, a ranking Pakistani government official told me in March that, although there was technically still an ongoing joint Pakistani-American investigation into Kansi's whereabouts, there had really been no activity for the past year. Mir Aimal Kansi—who not only entered the United States without being interviewed by the I.N.S. but was then, inexplicably, allowed to slip away after his identity was made known—was, in the view of many Pakistanis, a man whom the Americans did not really want to apprehend.

"The U.S. government has been fractured and divided over how to proceed on Kansi since this began," Vincent Cannistraro, a former top counterterrorism official with the C.I.A., told me in late September. "The F.B.I. doesn't share its information with other U.S. government agencies; they're trying to find Kansi with absolutely no information on the environment they're working in. They pulled their people out of Pakistan some time ago, and the investigation was on the plate of Islamabad. The danger passed for Kansi in that sense, and it also tells me that the U.S. government was not really looking for him."

Earlier this year, I'm told, the F.B.I.'s low-key strategy to apprehend Kansi began to change, largely as a result of pressure from Judy Becker-Darling and her family, and from Senator Specter and others on Capitol Hill. The Bureau reclassified Kansi as an "international terrorist." The State Department resisted the move, and continues to fear that raising Kansi's profile could lead to further retaliation against American diplomats, and could further strain the already uneasy relationship between Pakistan and the United States.

Nevertheless, in a surprise statement on October 2nd, the State Department announced—after a six-month standoff with the F.B.I.—that it had acceded to the Bureau's request to increase the reward offered for Kansi's arrest from a hundred thousand dollars to two million dollars, and to launch a vast publicity campaign in Pakistan, in which tens of thousands of bright-red matchbooks bearing Kansi's picture and the amount of the reward would be distributed, along with thousands of posters and photographs.

Judy Becker-Darling looks out the hotel window, in the direction of the C.I.A., and says, "Yes, you're a member of the family, until you die for them." Then she says, "All I really want to do is go to Balochistan and ask Kansi, 'Why? Why did you kill my husband? What did we at the C.I.A. do to you?' " ♦

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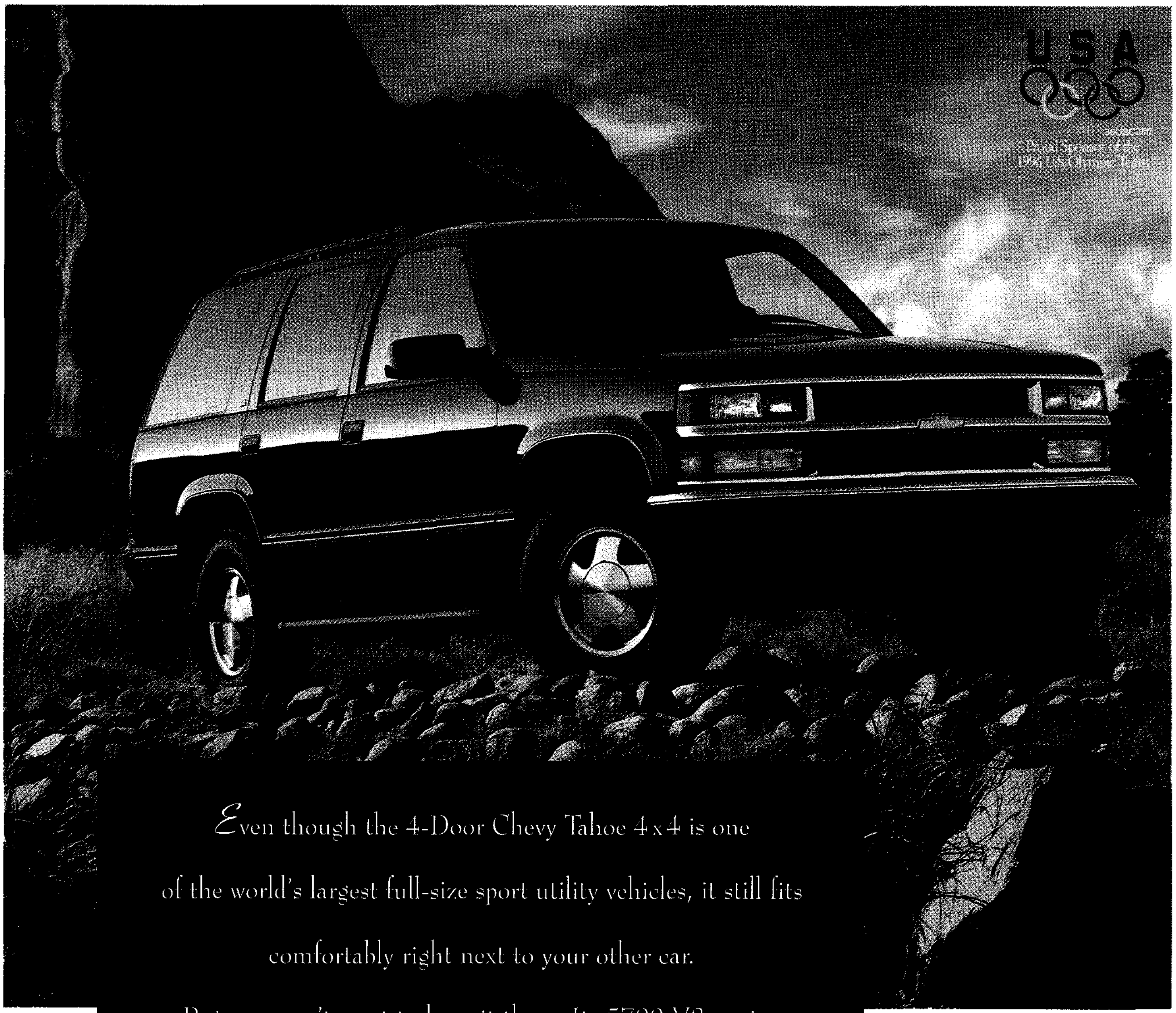

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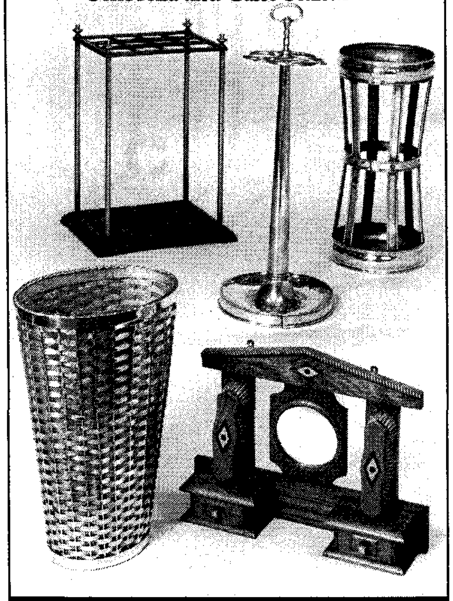

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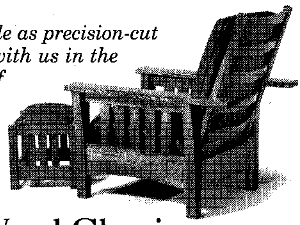

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PARIS JOURNAL

PRIVATE DOMAIN

All Parisians know that to get a nice place to live you have to know the right people, and the Prime Minister is no longer one of them.

BY ADAM GOPNIK

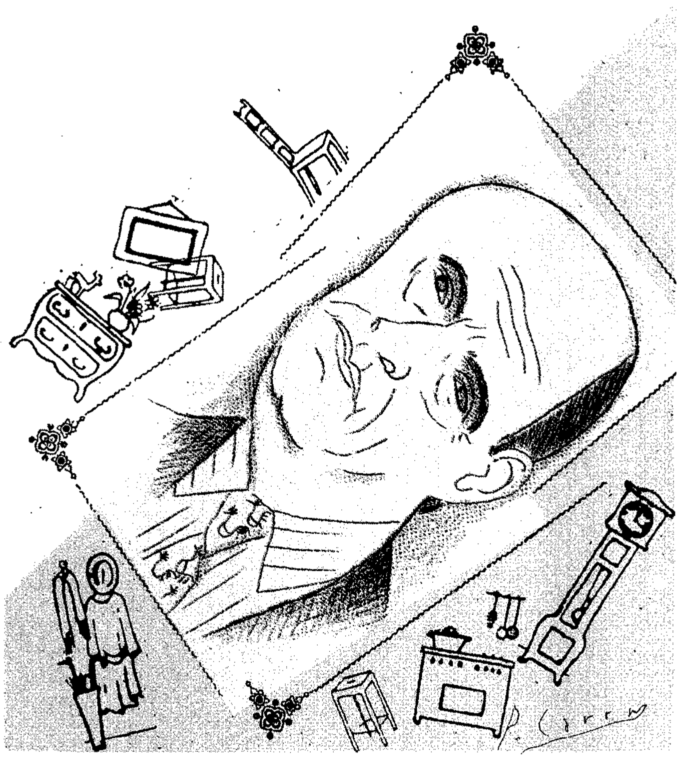
A BOMB went off under my bed the other morning. It was early on a gray Tuesday when I heard a flock of ambulances somewhere near my Left Bank street, making that forlorn, politely insistent two-note bleating all Paris ambulances make. I went downstairs and outside and found—nothing. The street-sweeper with the green plastic broom was sweeping; the young woman who keeps the striped-pajama boutique across the street was reading her Paul Auster novel. ("You left New York for *Paris*?" she demanded incredulously when I introduced myself not long ago.) Only in the early afternoon, when *Le Monde* came out, did I realize that the Islamic terrorists who are now working in Paris had left a bomb in an underground train, and that, give or take a few hundred yards, it had gone off beneath the second-floor refuge on the Left Bank which my wife and I had found this summer, after a long search. The ambulances were heading for the Gare d'Orsay, where the wounded were being taken.

"*Gardez votre sang-froid*" is the single, self-sufficient imperative posted on the what-to-do-in-an-emergency placard in the courtyard of our building, and on this occasion people had. The bombings here, though sometimes murderous in their effects, haven't caused any panic, or even much terror. Though Parisians believe they are superior by birth, they do not believe, as Americans do, that they are invulnerable by right. But even if our apartment building had been officially declared the epicenter of the bombing campaign, I don't think I'd move. Terrorism is part of life, while a nice apartment in Paris is a miracle.

For the new French Prime Minister, Alain Juppé, the bombing campaign has come as a vast, if unadmitted, relief, since he finally has a subject to talk about in public other than *l'affaire des logements*, which has dominated the news here for four months and once seemed likely to sink his government. For most of those months, in fact, Juppé has probably been the only person more preoccupied with apartments on the Left Bank than I was, though he and I approached the matter from opposite ends. I was trying to find one, while he was trying to explain to the French people why he had so many, and what all his relatives were doing living in them.

Juppé has been Prime Minister for just under six months. He is a long-fingered, elegant man of fifty, with the kind of enviable, aerodynamic baldness that in America only tycoons seem able to carry off—the Barry Diller, Larry Tisch style of baldness. Juppé comes from a simple family down in the Landes country. He did well in school, and was eventually admitted to the École Nationale d'Administration, in Paris—the tiny institution that produces nearly the entire French political élite. He came to the attention of an older fellow-*énarque*, Jacques Chirac, and when Chirac was Mayor of Paris, in the nineteen-eighties, Juppé became his "financial adjoint"—more or less the city comptroller. Then, when the conservative parties won the legislative elections two years ago, Chirac, though he had prudently decided not to seek the office of Prime Minister, arranged for Juppé to be named the Minister of Foreign Affairs, in which position, Bosnia aside, he was thought to have done well. So when Chirac was elected President, this May, it seemed inevitable that he would make Juppé his Prime Minister.

Like all ambitious French politicians, Juppé chooses to present himself as a literary man. He has actually written a book of reflections entitled "La Tentation de Venise"—"The Venetian Temptation." Juppé's Venetian temptation was to retire to a house there, where he could escape from political life, admire Giorgione's "Tempestà," drink Bellinis in the twilight, and think long, deep thoughts. "La Tentation" was regarded as a fighting campaign manifesto, since it is as necessary for an ambitious French politician to write a book explaining why he never likes to think of politics as it is for an ambitious American politician to write a book explaining why he never thinks of anything else. Juppé, ahead of the pack, had written a book asserting not only that he would rather be doing something else but that he would like to be doing it in a completely different country. The romance of retirement is still extremely powerful in France, descending, as it does, from Montaigne, who remains the model here of pensive, high-minded reclusion, even though he spent an important chunk of his life as the boss of a tough town. In Juppé's case, the descent from Montaigne, who supplies the epigraph for "La Tentation," is easy to show: Juppé is the Mayor of Bordeaux, as Montaigne was. (French politicians often hold more than one office at once, just in case.) Among French politicians, in fact, ostentatious displays of detachment are something of a competitive sport. After being succeeded as President by Chirac, François Mitterrand gave an interview to Christine Ockrent, the editor of *L'Express*, simply to announce that he was now taking long walks in Paris and looking at the sky. It was understood as his way of keeping his hand in. Not long ago, the former Prime Minister Édouard Balladur, who had been so busy looking detached from politics that he forgot to campaign for the Presidency this time around, sneaked an item into *L'Express* announcing that he, too, was taking walks and looking at the sky. It was the start of his comeback.



Prime Minister Alain Juppé, probably the only person more preoccupied with apartments on the Left Bank than the author.

PHILIPPE CARON

Then, at the beginning of June, the weekly comic paper *Le Canard Enchainé* revealed that Juppé, when he was the financial adjoint to Chirac, had taken the lease on an apartment in the Sixth Arrondissement which belonged to the *domaine privé* of the City of Paris. The *domaine privé* is a peculiarly Parisian establishment, although, even after four months of scandal, no one knows exactly what it is, how the City of Paris came to possess it, or how you get into it. At first, many Parisians confused the *domaine privé* with the general stock of public housing that the City of Paris has built since the First World War; most of that housing is on the periphery, and a lot of it is in the less desirable neighborhoods of the Nineteenth and the Twentieth Arrondissements. It turns out, however, that the City of Paris also owns a small, semi-secret group of apartments and apartment buildings that are given out at the discretion of whoever happens to be running Paris. These *domaine privé* apartments came into the hands of the Parisian government in all kinds of interesting ways. Many of them are on the beautiful old streets of the Left Bank, near the river, because of various failed city plans that left Paris with a lot of property, which the city fathers eventually started renting to one another. Until 1977, the prefects of the Paris arrondissements controlled the *domaine privé*, but then the system was reformed, which, as often happens in France, managed to make the mechanics of it even murkier. Today, no one seems to know exactly how many *domaine privé* apartments there are. One estimate puts the number at about thirteen hundred; another puts it at about fifteen hundred; still another says that there are more than four thousand.

Juppé's apartment, on the lovely Rue Jacob, was a lavish spread, complete with garden and terrace, that he had, in effect, rented to himself for a little less than three thousand dollars a month—well below the market price. When this arrangement was challenged, Juppé announced that he felt "serene" and that he couldn't see what the fuss was about, since anyone could have found out that he lived there by looking at the mailbox. There was something equally off key about Chirac's later defense of his protégé. During a televised press conference, he declared himself "profoundly shocked" by "the exploitation of a fact that no one should contest." Here, he explained, Juppé was actually paying about three thousand dollars a month in rent, while there were tens of thousands of people in France living in subsidized apartments who did infinitely less service for the nation than Juppé.

As it happened, my wife and I arrived in Paris to look for a place just as the news of Juppé's arrangement broke, and we soon discovered what Juppé obviously knew to be the vital fact but was having a very hard time saying outright: *all* apartments in Paris that you would long to live in belong to the *domaine privé*. This is to say not that they all belong to the city government but that they can be obtained only through membership in one or another of the political or literary or fashionable *keiretsus* that dominate Paris. Though Paris is in many ways a grasping and commercial city, it is not ruled by the market in quite the way that most other Western cities are.

My wife and I, eight-month-old in tow, learned this quickly as we wan-

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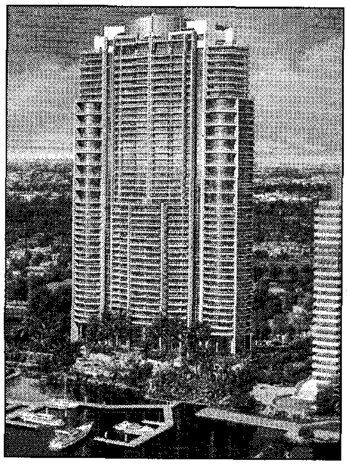

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dered from apartment to apartment. We discovered that apartments came in three varieties: sad apartments that no one would want; interesting apartments that would require *grands projets* to make them work; and nice apartments that had a long private history or, to put it another way, a catch, and so were in a *domaine privé* of their own. This one came with a sister in America, who might or might not eventually return. Another was available only if the divorce that had led to its emptying out was concluded. (With tears in his eyes, the previous resident made it a condition that we buy the espresso machine that he and his departed love had picked out in happier days.) That one belonged to a philosopher who had changed his sexual orientation, and was available with the proviso that if he changed it back he would need the apartment again. The inwardness of Paris rules out the illusion created by the renting of an apartment in New York—the illusion of renewal, of starting over. An apartment in New York is a blank slate. In Paris, it is an already parsed sentence, a string of imperfect verbs, hidden conditional constructions, and long, intricately wrought clauses in the past tense.

Juppé would probably have been able to survive the revelation of his living arrangements if only *Le Canard Enchainé* hadn't published, a couple of Wednesdays later, the news that when Juppé was a city official he had taken apartments in the *domaine privé* for his son and daughter as well, and that these apartments, too, were right there on the Rue Jacob. Then it turned out that both Juppé's ex-wife and his half brother had apartments courtesy of the City of Paris. (The former Mme. Juppé was lodged across the river, on the Right Bank, presumably out of deference to the sensibilities of the new Mme. Juppé.) At this point, *l'affaire des logements* became a little more serious. *Le Canard* published a document apparently showing that Juppé had approved a rent reduction on his son's apartment from seven thousand francs per month to six thousand (a difference of about two hundred dollars). This might have contravened an all-purpose law against ethical backsliding on the part

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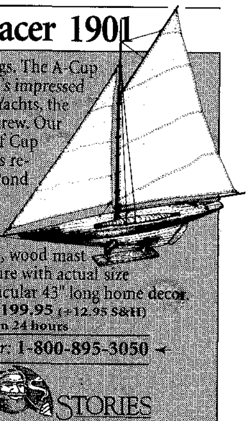

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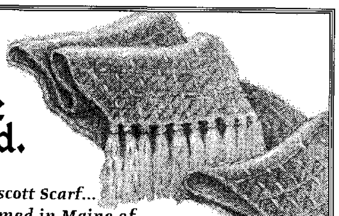

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of public officials—a law whose worst penalty, sweetly enough, was that the offender would be prohibited from ever again being elected to office.

Things got so bad that Juppé had to submit to a humiliation that the French had previously considered fit only for American politicians. He had to go on television and answer questions from reporters. (De Gaulle spoke directly to the French people or else in highly choreographed press conferences; Mitterrand would tolerate a few friendly journalists but would explain to them why the questions they were asking were not of a standard that could decently be put to the President of the Republic.) Juppé, by contrast, had to give one of those jumpy, undignified, I-have-nothing-to-hide performances beloved of American handlers.

Juppé did his best. He pointed out that members of the French press had been around for dinner at the now famous apartment on the Rue Jacob, and nobody had seemed upset about the apartment then. (This argument was regarded as fighting dirty. The next day, *Le Monde* haughtily noted that it was not proper for guests to ask their host how much he paid in rent and who owned his apartment.) Juppé also announced that he had lowered the rent on his son's apartment only because he was afraid of contributing to a general inflation of rents in the city. It didn't help much. In July, a local lawyer with Socialist Party connections began filing letters of complaint against Juppé with the state district attorney in Paris, Bruno Cotte, who would therefore have to decide whether to go the Italian route and indict the Prime Minister of France (and, not incidentally, launch his own political career) or go the honored French route and let it all pass.

By this time, I had come into possession of what I thought was the lease on an apartment, and so found the later stages of *l'affaire des logements* very diverting. There is nothing like being even an honorary, part-time insider to make insiderness look cute. Then, just as we were about to leave Paris to go home and collect our furniture, I got a call from the real-estate agent. "I have bad news," she announced. "Your apartment is off the market." She made

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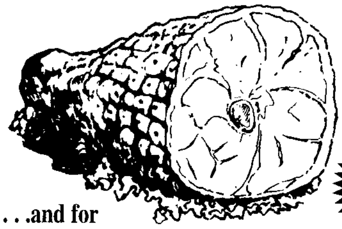

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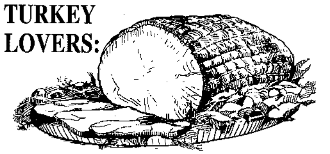

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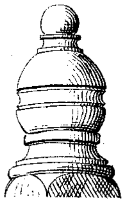

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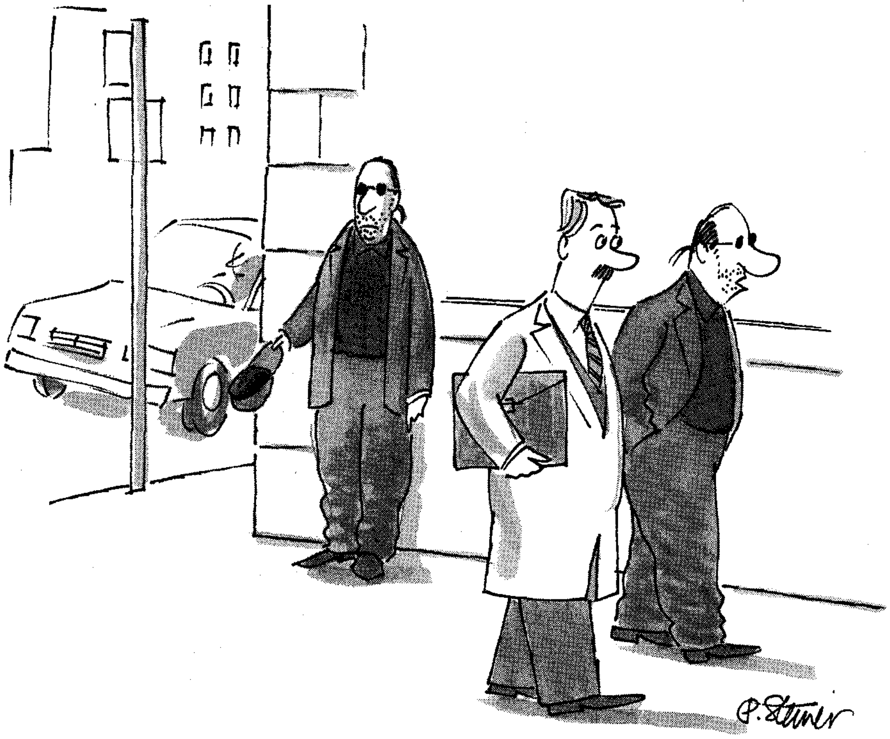

"A year ago, that could have been me."

• •

it sound as though the apartment had won a prize.

THINGS worked out better for us than they did for the Prime Minister. We came back to Paris at the end of September and managed, through various routes, to find another apartment. The story with this one was that it belonged to a young man who had just been posted by his bank to Tokyo; the apartment was affordable because he and his wife had left it half renovated and half a wreck. On the other hand, they would want the apartment back when they returned from Japan, at some unspecified date, which makes us leap every time the doorbell rings.

Bruno Cotte has at last offered his judgment on the Juppé case. He declared that he would not indict Juppé for what he had done with the *domaine privé* apartments, provided that the Prime Minister of France get out of his apartment and rent one someplace else. This may have been a first in the history of jurisprudence: an eviction notice issued by a magistrate against the Prime Minister of a major Western power. "This was more cruel than an indictment, which at least had the savor of persecution," a veteran Parisian journalist said to me of the Cotte verdict. "An indictment might have been insupportable, but an eviction is merely ridiculous."

Naturally, American and British journalists have tried to analyze *l'affaire des logements*, and, interpreting it in the light of Anglo-American politics, have concluded that Juppé has suffered because he was seen as a member of an unduly privileged élite. This is in fact almost the direct opposite of the truth. The Frenchmen who are currently the most enraged at the government—the functionaries who stopped all business in Paris several weeks ago—are not protesting against the accumulated perks of a privileged class. They *are* the privileged class, protesting on behalf of their accumulated perks. What made them mad about *l'affaire des logements*, and Juppé's conduct, was not that it revealed to them something they hadn't known but that it reminded them of something they knew all too well; namely, that the system of *acquis sociaux*—entitlements—runs so deep in France that to abolish it would be in some sense to abolish French life itself. Every Frenchman who is not outright destitute sits in the middle of a *domaine privé*—that is, within a domain of private benefits that he enjoys by virtue of his place in civil society. The triumph of the Fifth Republic was to have expanded that domain so that it included nearly everybody. But it may no longer be capable of any expansion at all. The people who are left outside now seem to be left outside for good. The North African immigrants, in particular, who fill the Paris *banlieue* that the police have largely abandoned are not just a minority; they are without any entrée at all. They are called, simply, "the excluded." Some of them set bombs off under your bed.

Juppé's serenity is certainly gone for good. Already, he is speaking plaintively of his fate. "But why have they done this to me? I am honest!" he told an interviewer recently. "Had I known, when I was Foreign Minister I could have moved to the Quai d'Orsay, where I would have had at my disposal two hundred and eighty square metres and a chambermaid, and nobody would have reproached me at all." People agreed that he had a point, but they also noticed the way he was able to rattle off the square metres by heart.

After brooding on this affair, the French élite has decided that the cure for the kinds of hidden deals that fill French public life is *transparence*, which has become (along with *exclusion*) the word of the moment here. By *transparence* people just mean that everybody should see everything that is going on. A lot of Parisians would now settle for having a Paris that is transparent the way an ant farm is transparent—with a cutaway front so that you can see the action even if you can't affect it. But what has always given Paris its peculiar grace and favor is that things that are hidden away elsewhere (like, say, adulteries) are all out in the open here, while things that are all out in the open elsewhere are hidden away here (like, say, the way you get an apartment). A Paris you can see right through hardly seems worth having. ♦

A defense attorney's job is to get his client off, not necessarily to find the truth. It's not a gentile profession.—*Greenwood (Miss.) Commonwealth.*

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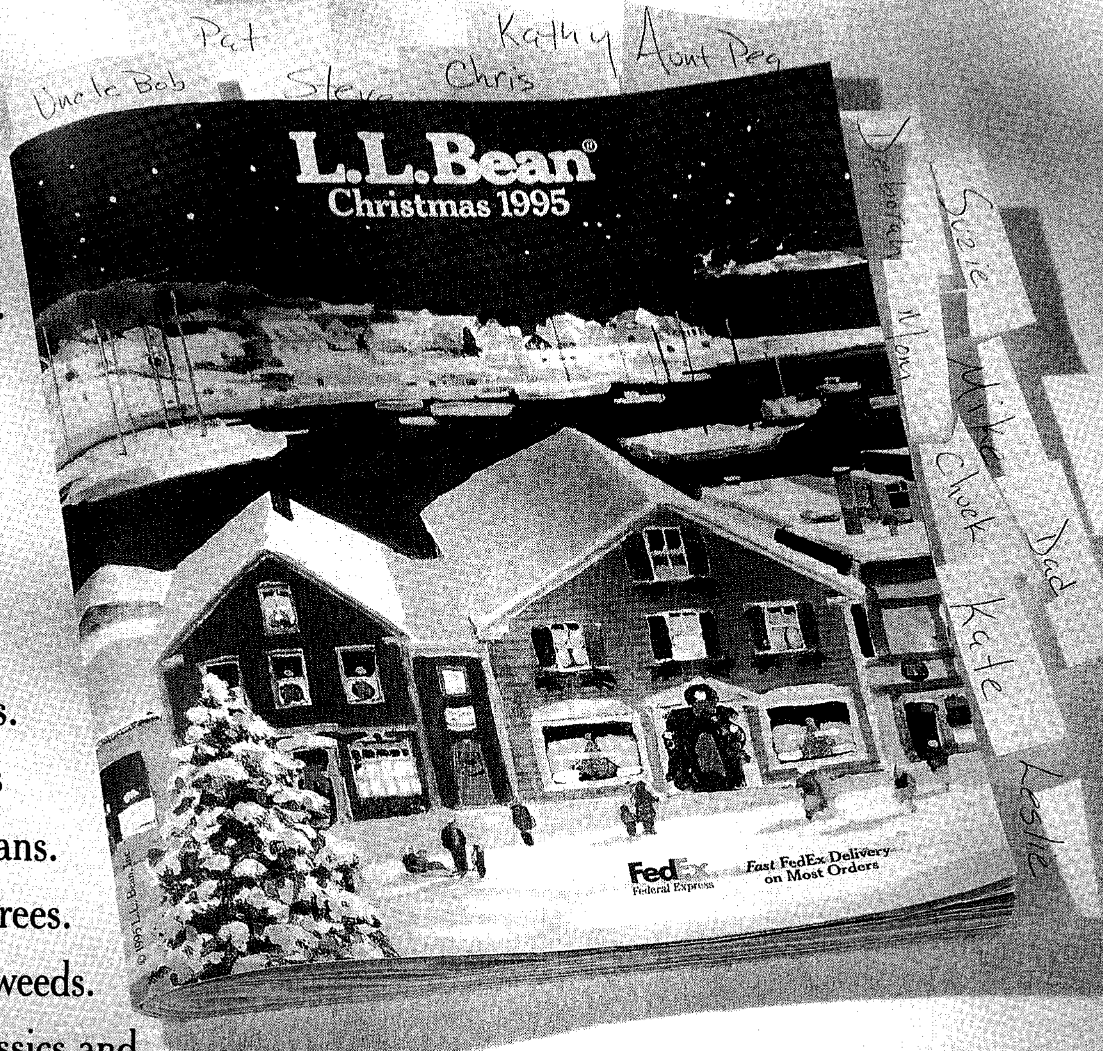
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ANNALS OF COMMUNICATIONS

THE PIRATE

Rupert Murdoch often shuns the normal practices and principles of business and the media to get what he wants. It's a strategy that's working in China but hasn't with Time Warner.

BY KEN AULETTA

WHEN Rupert Murdoch arrives at his office on the Twentieth Century Fox lot, in Los Angeles, the single television is set to CNN, and the sound is off. At about eight-thirty, Dot Wyndoe, Murdoch's assistant of thirty-three years, spreads newspapers out on a shelf across from his desk: "TOP COP NICKED MY WIFE," blares one of his London tabloids, the *Sun;* "LOVE JUDGE COMES HOME," screams the New York *Post.* These are the only noisy elements in the office. Even the phones are quiet. Numerous calls stack up and are announced on an electronic monitor at his right elbow. Pastel paintings by Australian artists hang on snow-white walls over white couches and armchairs.

Murdoch's hair is turning white. He is sixty-four, and his shoulders stoop slightly. His voice is soft, and his manner is unfailingly courteous, as he sits with one leg tucked under the other. Only the hard brown eyes suggest that he is a predator.

He spends most of his time on the phone. He phones while driving his BMW to work, and he starts phoning from his desk as soon as he arrives, about 7 A.M. He always apologizes for disturbing an employee at an odd hour or on vacation, but the apology is more a ritual than a sign of genuine contrition. He hardly ever says hello or goodbye.

Murdoch lives in Beverly Hills, in a Spanish-style house, on six acres, formerly owned by Jules Stein, the founder of MCA. He's often away, doing business out of a Gulfstream jet he owns, or from one or another of the offices he keeps in several cities, including New York, where he works from a high-rise on Sixth Avenue near Times Square. This office is also white, and it has seven silent TV sets.

"Eric, sorry to wake you," Murdoch was saying from the New York office one recent afternoon. It was before dawn in Australia, and he had reached Eric Walsh, a lobbyist based in Canberra, who has been advising him on how to get the Chinese government to sanction his Star TV satellite system. "I was going to go to Hong Kong for a week, but I've been invited for a one-day conference in Beijing," he told Walsh. Murdoch wanted to know if he should reach out to the Chinese. And, if so, when? "Do I need an alibi?" he asked Walsh. "Or can I just write and say, 'I need a half hour of your time'?"

Walsh cautioned Murdoch to stay in the background. "Nobody understands what's going on in there," Murdoch mused in response, slipping down further in his soft leather chair, until his head was not much higher than his desk. "Everyone has different readings. You just never bloody know."

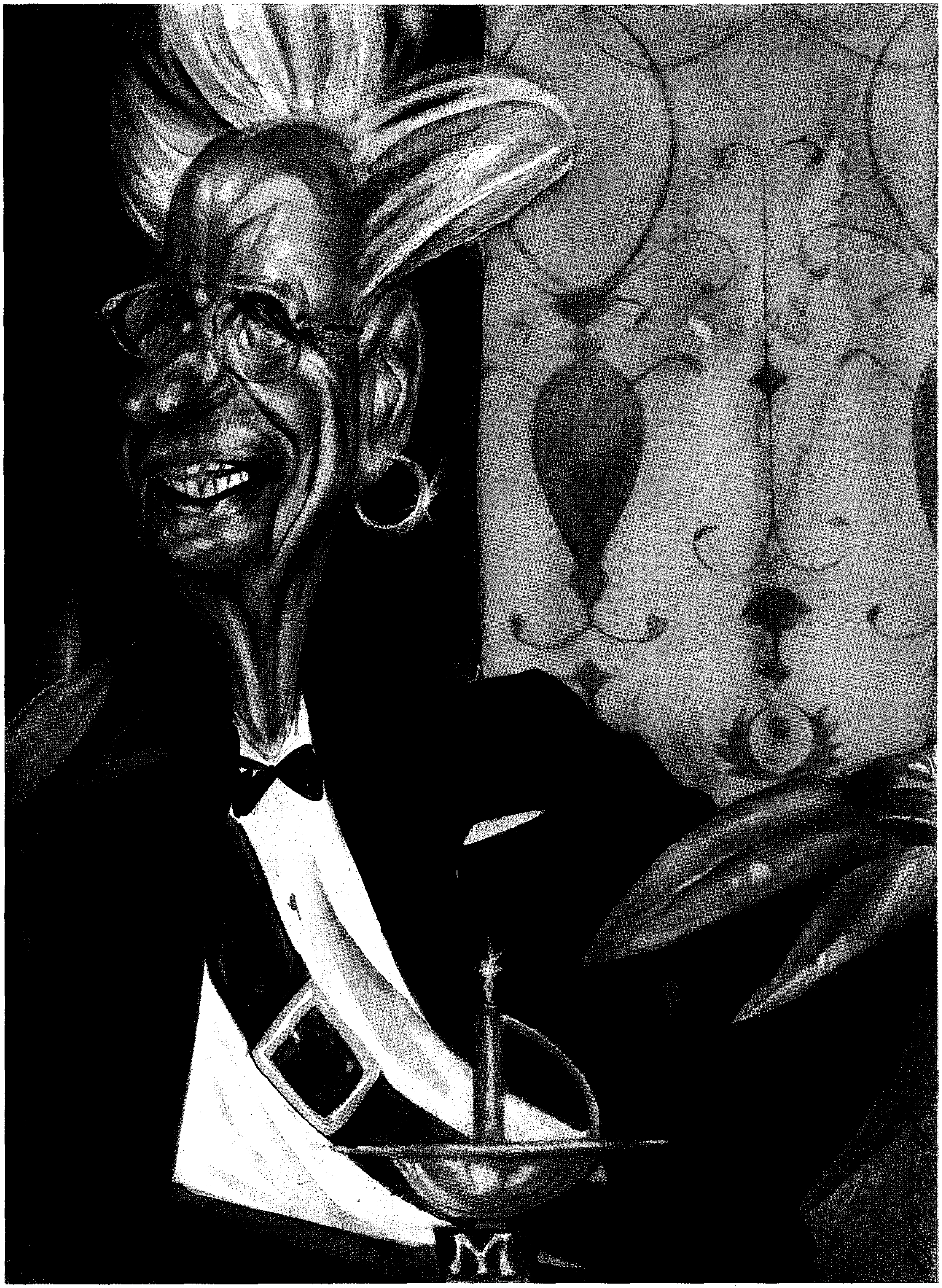
Without the support of the Chinese government, Star TV can have no paid subscribers, and advertisers stay away. That situation translates into big losses—projected at eighty million dollars in the current fiscal year, Murdoch says. He owns a satellite service that can potentially reach two-thirds of the world's population, yet, because of widespread concern in Asia about "cultural imperialism" and the impact of uncensored images and information, he has had to curb his aggressive tendencies. "My Chinese friends tell me, 'Just go there every month,'" he says. "'Knock on doors. It may take ten years.'" This is not the message that Murdoch wants to hear.

Murdoch is the chairman, C.E.O., and principal shareholder of a company, the News Corporation, that produced nearly nine billion dollars in revenue this year and more than a billion in profits, but he feels frustrated. He is frustrated by China. He is frustrated because he has no international news network to supply his Fox network here, or his Sky or Star satellite services in Europe and Asia, while Ted Turner has CNN. And until last month he was frustrated because he owned the rights to televise sporting events all over the world but didn't own a sports network, like ESPN.

Over all, however, these frustrations present mere skirmishes in a global war that Murdoch is winning. All the media deals and maneuvers of the past few months have come about, in part, because Disney and Time Warner felt that they had to catch up to Murdoch. "He basically wants to conquer the world," says Sumner Redstone, the chairman of Viacom. "And he seems to be doing it." Former press lords, like Lord Beaverbrook, William Randolph Hearst, and Henry Luce, were dominant figures in a single medium on a single continent. Rupert Murdoch's empire spreads across six continents and nine different media: newspapers (his company owns or has an interest in a hundred and thirty-two); magazines (he owns or has an interest in twenty-five, including *TV Guide*, which has the largest circulation of any weekly magazine in the United States); books (HarperCollins and Zondervan, the dominant publisher of religious books); broadcasting (the Fox network; twelve TV stations in the United States; fifteen per cent of the Seven network, in Australia; and Sky Radio, in Britain); direct-broadcast satellite television (Star TV, in Asia; forty per cent of BSkyB, in Europe; half ownership of Vox, in Germany; and a yet to be named joint venture with Globo, in South America); cable (the fX network, in the United States; Canal Fox, in Latin America; and half ownership of Foxtel, in Australia); a movie studio (Twentieth Century Fox); home video (Fox Video); and on-line access to the worldwide Internet (Delphi). Murdoch not only reaches readers; he also holds the electronic keys to their homes.

Murdoch moves more swiftly than most rivals, takes bigger risks, and never

STEVE BRODNER



"Rupert Murdoch basically wants to conquer the world," Sumner Redstone says. "And he seems to be doing it."

"I wasn't able to find a spot for your material immediately, but I feel certain I'll be able to work it in sometime in the not too distant future, My Lord."

• •

gives up. In fact, despite public denials he has made, in late October he was still contemplating ways to reverse the deal that Time Warner announced in September to buy Turner Broadcasting System—a deal that blocked some of Murdoch's own expansionist plans. One scheme that he discussed internally and ordered his bankers and lawyers to dissect carefully was to attempt a takeover of Time Warner valued at more than forty billion dollars. "We're working hard at it," a central figure in the News Corporation said in late October, days before Murdoch became convinced that the effort would fail. The impediment, two participants say, was not finding partners but figuring out how to avoid the steep capital-gains taxes on the sale of Time Warner's various pieces to eager buyers. The idea was to make a bid for Time Warner in the next few months, before the merger with Turner was consummated. There were internal discussions about such potential partners as the Bronfmans, whose Seagram already owns just under fifteen per cent of Time Warner; US West, which owns twenty-five per cent of Time Warner's entertainment assets and opposes the terms of the Turner merger; and John Malone, the president and C.E.O. of Tele-Communications, Inc., the world's largest cable company.

MURDOCH created the first global media network by investing in both software (movies, TV shows, sports franchises, publishing) and the distribution platforms (the Fox network, cable, and TV satellite systems) that disseminate the software. Within the next few years, the News Corporation's satellite system will blanket South America, in addition to Asia and Europe and parts of the Middle East and Africa. "Basically, we want to establish satellite platforms in major parts of the world," Murdoch explains. "And that gives us leverage here." If a cable-box owner or a programmer—John Malone or Time Warner, for instance—wants to reach a foreign market covered by one of Murdoch's satellite systems, Murdoch can extract favors from the programmer in the markets it controls in the United States. "What we're trying to do is put ourselves in a position in other countries that some of these cable companies are in in this country," he says. He wants to be the gatekeeper.

To advance his grand plan, Murdoch arranged a summit meeting in suburban Denver on August 10th with John Malone, of TCI. Murdoch called the meeting because he believed that Malone was necessary for capturing two of the missing pieces in his empire—the sports network and the news network. Malone owns fifteen regional cable sports channels and is a partner with Charles Dolan's Cablevision Systems in other regional sports channels around the country; these, when joined with Murdoch's and Malone's overseas sports holdings, could become the foundation for an international sports network. In addition, Malone was Ted Turner's most influential shareholder and could link Murdoch with CNN. Murdoch was assuming that Turner was a possible partner, and Malone was openly dismissive of Time Warner's management.

The day before the meeting, Murdoch summoned to his California office Chase Carey, the chairman and C.E.O. of Fox Television, and Preston Padden, the president of network distribution for Fox and the president of telecommunications and television for the News Corporation. Murdoch, from behind the oak table he uses as a desk, began by noting that at that moment Malone was trying to help Turner finance a bid to acquire CBS, which would compete with Fox. "I think he intends to screw us," Murdoch said.

The three men held another caucus the next day, huddling in green upholstered armchairs on Murdoch's Gulfstream as it headed toward Denver for the meeting, at 2 P.M. They knew that Malone and Turner needed cash to take over CBS, and they talked about how Turner might be encouraged to sell something.

"The only asset we'd be interested in is CNN," Carey said.

Padden asked what might happen if Fox became a one-third owner in CNN.

"You don't want to hand over all your news efforts to Ted," said Murdoch, who is as wary of Turner's being too liberal as Turner is of Murdoch's being too conservative.

A car waited at the Denver airport to take Murdoch, Carey, and Padden to TCI headquarters. The meeting was held in a stark, glass-walled conference room dominated by a black granite oval table. The only refreshments were a few cans of diet soda and a thermos of coffee on a granite sideboard; each corner of the room was occupied by a rubber plant. Malone, attired in a red-and-white checked short-sleeved button-down shirt and chinos, was careful not to sit at the head of the table. Flanked by two TCI executives, he took a seat across from the Murdoch trio. The table was bare except for a single folded sheet of paper in front of Malone.

The six men, who did not rise from their seats for the next four hours, began with industry gossip, which soon bored Murdoch. He changed the subject: "Are you getting it together for Ted and CBS?"

"We know where the money will come from," Malone answered. "The question is Time Warner. I think their strategy is to drive Ted nuts." Time Warner, which, like TCI, then owned about twenty per cent of Turner Broadcasting, had the right to veto all acquisitions, and it was thwarting the takeover of CBS. Malone said, contemptuously, that he thought Gerald Levin, the Time Warner chairman and president, was seesawing, because his management was engaged in an internal war.

Rather offhandedly, Murdoch asked, "Does Ted want to sell any assets?"

"No," Malone replied, with equal aplomb. "I don't know of any asset Ted wants to part with." He knew that Murdoch was fishing, hoping he could hook CNN.

Privately, Murdoch describes Malone as "the most brilliant strategist" he knows. Malone says the same thing about Murdoch, and over the years they have been both adversaries and allies, depending on the venture. It's difficult to keep track of partnerships in the communications business these days, because the players change sides depending on the country or on the deal.

Malone had several goals in this meeting. He wanted to see if there were areas where he and Murdoch could do business together, and he wanted to avoid conflicts. Both were interested in creating a sports network that could compete with ESPN, and he thought he could get Murdoch to invest in the regional sports channels that TCI shared with Charles Dolan's Cablevision.

"The fact is," Malone told Murdoch during their summit, "we tried to merge our sports with Chuck's maybe fifty times." Each time, the plan unravelled because Malone and Dolan could never agree on who would run the partnership. But Malone was convinced that if a third party came in—someone "who may be more objective than we can be with each other," perhaps Murdoch—a successful merger could be achieved. "Between us, we have all the regional sports networks in the country controlled—except Minneapolis," he said, and that came to thirty-three million subscribers. "The real value for us," he went on, "is putting these together," thereby creating a powerful entity for buying worldwide sports rights, as ESPN does.

Malone and Murdoch then began a *tour d'horizon*, starting with a review of what each of them was doing to reach the estimated seventy million television households in Central and South America, and how each was faring in Europe. Malone did most of the talking. "I guess at this point Europe is pretty stable," he said. A short time later, he said, "The thing we haven't talked about is Japan." He barely moved as he spoke, keeping two fingers pressed to his temples. "We have a deal there in sports, and we have to discuss how that relates to Star."

"Star isn't there at the moment," Murdoch said. "But we are pretty far down the road." He asked how Time Warner was doing in Japan.

"They're running way behind us," Malone said. "They came to us and asked, 'Why don't we do a joint venture?' " He went on to say that he had rejected this for two reasons: first, it was dumb politics, since most nations carefully limit foreign ownership; second, "Time Warner is brain-damaged in terms of making decisions. You've got to move fast." Malone then returned to sports: "All these pieces fit, Rupert. We ought to be able to arrive at this"—a sports merger—"in painless fashion." He added, "We think Asia will take a while."

"Japan is now," Murdoch said.

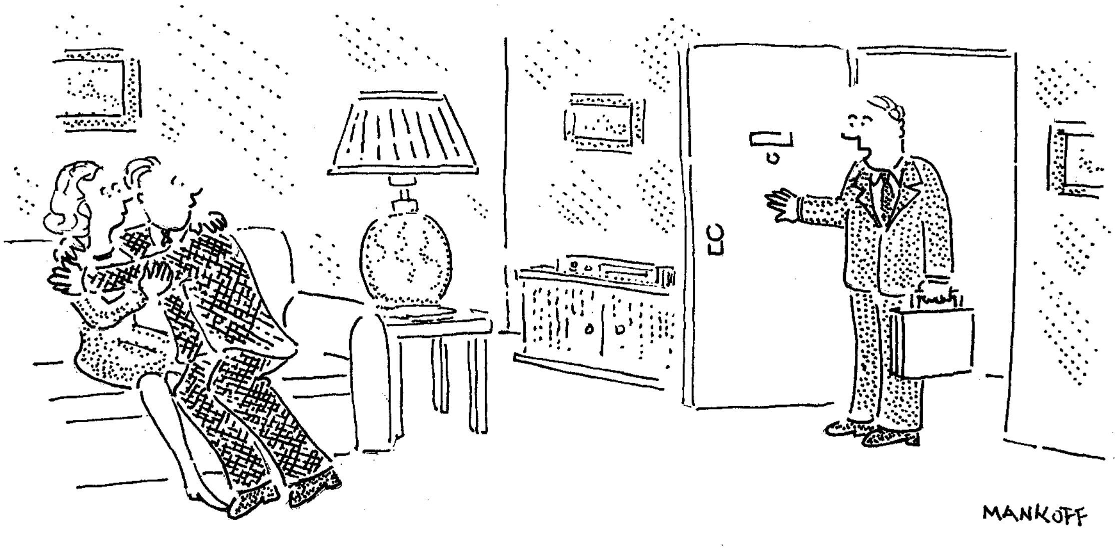
"Either you guys get in or ESPN will own sports," Malone warned.

"We got to go in and kick ass," Murdoch agreed.

Dolan was difficult to negotiate with, Malone warned.

"If we have to go without him, we'll go without him," Murdoch said. They could always fold in Cablevision later. What Murdoch needed was some numbers from Malone.

The single sheet of paper slid across the table. It contained, Malone explained,



"Well, Elaine, it looks as though we're not on the same page when it comes to the fidelity issue."

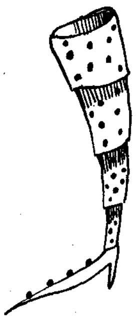
what TCI thought each of its fifteen regional sports channels was worth.

Afterward, I asked Murdoch and Malone separately if there was anything they had discussed alone. Only one thing, Murdoch replied: in a private moment, Malone had "tried to talk me into buying five per cent of Time Warner to put it in play." Malone also conceded that they had talked about Time Warner.

Murdoch thought that he had accomplished half his mission. He was confident that he and Malone would make a sports deal, but he felt that CNN was slipping away, not least because Turner would probably spurn him. A fair number of communications-company C.E.O.s think that Murdoch is a pirate.

CNN became even further out of reach the following month, when Time Warner announced a merger with Turner. This was a real blow. Murdoch and Malone had been outmaneuvered. Malone no longer sat in the cockpit with Turner. His role had been reduced to that of a passenger and an investor. "The picture is confusing," a subdued Murdoch told me in late September. "Strategies are changing day to day." He partly blamed Jane Fonda, who is Turner's wife. "I surmise Jane had a great hand in it," he said. " 'We can change the world together.' "

Despite the setback, Murdoch and Malone's meeting did produce some concrete results. Murdoch chased Charles Dolan, and when, as Malone had anticipated, they could not reach an agreement the News Corporation and TCI negotiated, and on October 31st announced that they had agreed to become partners in a new, worldwide Fox sports network to compete with ESPN. They also have tentatively agreed to become partners in a direct satellite system in South America.



Malone sees Murdoch's strategy as much broader than that of his foes. He is not just trying to "get big," Malone observes. "He sees the nexus between programming and platform." Unlike Disney and Viacom, which have both concentrated on programming, Murdoch owns satellite distribution systems that span the globe. And, unlike his competitors in the satellite business, he owns a programming factory—Twentieth Century Fox. Competitors like NBC own neither. And TCI, Malone admits, has cable platforms but is "too weak in programming." Furthermore, unlike Time Warner and Viacom, Murdoch doesn't have a lot of debt: he has several billion dollars of investment capital available. And, unlike any other communications giants except perhaps Sumner Redstone and Bill Gates, he has a controlling interest in his company. "Rupert is a bit like a painter with a canvas, but in his mind the canvas has no perimeters," Arthur Siskind, the general counsel for the News Corporation, observes. "He's going to keep painting and painting."

MURDOCH is a pirate; he will cunningly circumvent rules, and sometimes principles, to get his way, as his recent adventures in China demonstrate.

Sometime in 1992, Murdoch took his initial look at Star TV, which was then a five-channel satellite service operating out of Hong Kong and reaching fifty-three countries. He wanted to enter into a partnership with the owner—Li Ka-shing, a Hong Kong billionaire, who was on good terms with the Chinese government, and with Li's son, Richard, who ran the company on behalf of his father—but only if the News Corporation could manage Star. In July of 1993, Murdoch offered five hundred and twenty-five million dollars for sixty-four per cent of Star, and that led to an agreement.

Murdoch was confident that Li and his son could run political interference from China. Others were less certain. Robert Wright, the president of NBC, recalls that one reason NBC had not pursued a deal with Star was the fear of opposition from the Chinese government. Perhaps Murdoch, too, should have worried more about this. The Chinese were still smarting from an abortive attempt he had made earlier that year to buy thirty per cent of Hong Kong's largest broadcaster, TVB, despite a law stipulating that no foreign entity could own more than twenty per cent of a communications company if it also owned another media outlet, and Murdoch did—the *South China Morning Post* (which he subsequently sold).

Murdoch seems to have thought that he could get around the Chinese authorities' hostility toward his ownership of Star, because technically he did not need the sanction of *any* government to deliver pictures from space. Besides, Murdoch is supremely confident—to the point of arrogance, perhaps—that he can get what he wants. "Rupert figured he could find a way to deal with China," George Vradenburg, who was then an executive vice-president of Fox, recalls.

If it had not been for the Speech, Murdoch might have found a way. On September 1, 1993, he invited hundreds of advertisers to Whitehall Palace, in London, and gave a speech explaining why the News Corporation was at the cutting edge of the communications revolution. He declared that George Orwell was wrong. "Advances in the technology of telecommunications have proved an unambiguous threat to totalitarian regimes everywhere," he said. "Fax machines enable dissidents to bypass state-controlled print media; direct-dial telephony makes it difficult for a state to control interpersonal voice communications. And satellite broadcasting makes it possible for information-hungry residents of many closed societies to bypass state-controlled television channels."

A month after the Whitehall speech, the Chinese Prime Minister signed into law a virtual ban on individual ownership of satellite dishes, and a suddenly chastened Murdoch was forced to show solicitude toward a totalitarian regime. He consulted many experts. He moved to Hong Kong for six weeks, and he reached out to Chinese officials. "He analyzed the problem objectively," his public-relations adviser, Howard Rubenstein, recalls. "He didn't make any excuses. It was an error that he made."

Murdoch had spoken like the libertarian he has professed to be, but now he chose to be reëducated, and among the lessons he learned was how deeply the Chinese government detested the BBC, whose World Service news was carried on a Star channel. The regime was especially angered by a BBC documentary that investigated Chairman Mao's unorthodox sexual habits. And, since the BBC was British, it was seen as the ally of forces that sought to keep Hong Kong independent of the mainland.

In April of 1994, Murdoch removed the BBC from the Star network in China and replaced it with Chinese-language films. "The BBC was driving them nuts," Murdoch says. "It's not worth it." The Chinese government is "scared to death of what happened in Tiananmen Square," he says. "The truth is—and we Americans don't like to admit it—that authoritarian countries can work. There may have been human-rights abuses in Chile.

"Are you in for Tarzan?"

• •

But that country under Pinochet raised living standards. And now it has a democracy. The best thing you can do in China is engage the Chinese and wait."

How does Murdoch explain his new tolerance for dictatorships? "I'm not saying they're right," he replies. "You don't go in there and run a controlled press. You just stay out of the press."

As he did with the BBC?

"Yes," he replies. "We're not proud of that decision. It was the only way."

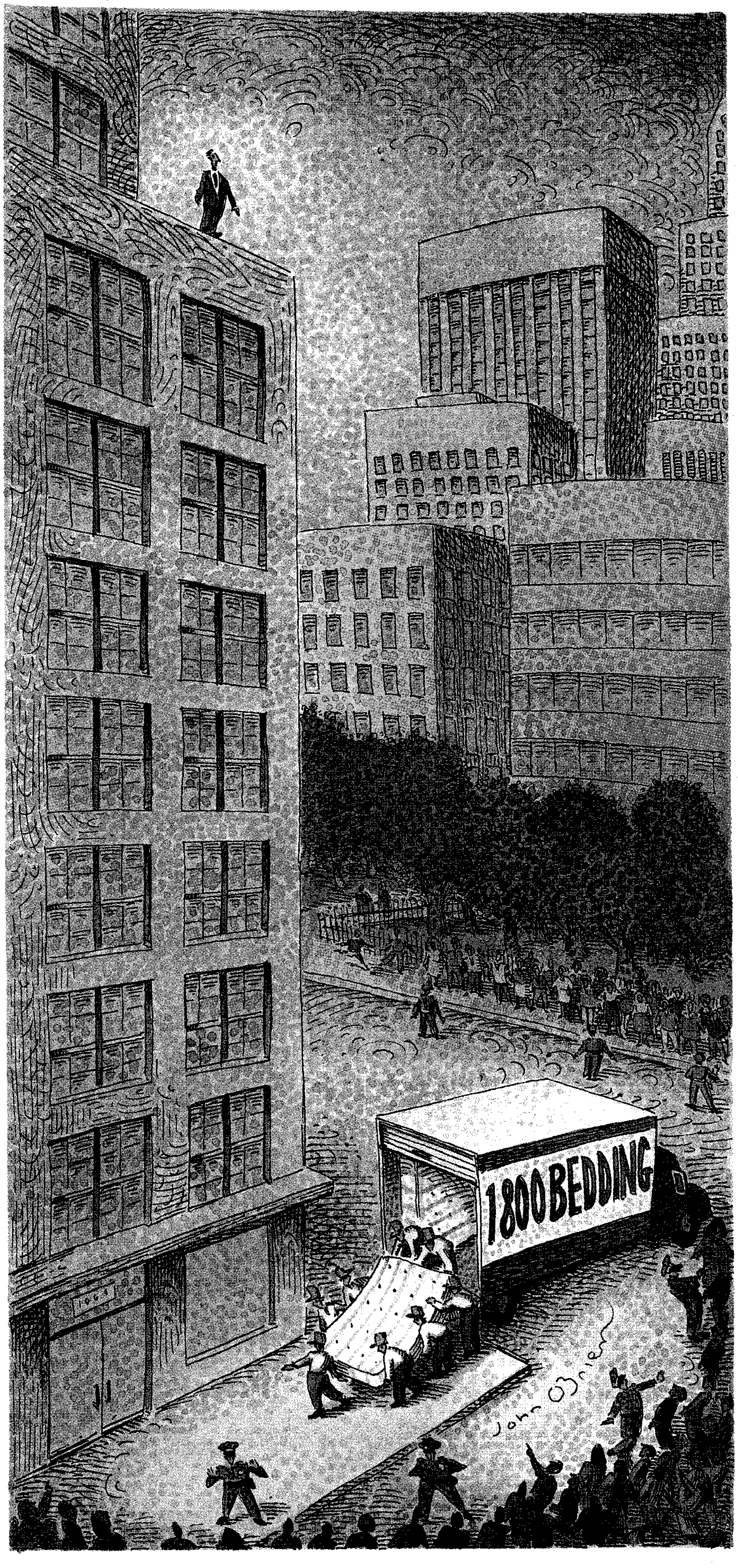
Murdoch was not the only media potentate to grovel to a repressive regime. In Asia at about this time, Ted Turner, after meeting with Chinese broadcasting officials, criticized the United States for trying to "tell so many other countries in the world what to do" about human rights. And, when the former Prime Minister of Singapore and his son, the deputy prime minister, threatened to sue for libel because of an article in the *International Herald Tribune* suggesting that the deputy prime minister had been appointed to his post in an act of nepotism, the paper, which is owned by the New York *Times* and the Washington *Post*, issued an abject public apology.

Murdoch's campaign to win over the Chinese authorities was multifaceted. It included replacing Star's English-only format with programming in Chinese; buying sports rights to badminton and other sports popular with the Chinese; joining with four international music companies to create a music channel for local Chinese talent; becoming a partner with the Tianjin Sports Development Company in the construction of four television studios and post-production centers; starting a pay-TV channel in Mandarin; and putting up five million four hundred thousand dollars for a joint investment with the Communist Party organ, *People's Daily*, to provide, among other things, an on-line version of the kind of dull newspaper that he would never publish in the West.

Last winter, Basic Books, a division of the News Corporation's HarperCollins, brought out a hagiography of Deng Xiaoping by his youngest daughter, Deng Rong, who wrote under her nickname, Deng Maomao. Ms. Deng has long served as her father's personal secretary, and is married to He Ping, the head of Poly Technologies, one of the country's largest military conglomerates. The HarperCollins catalogue announced that the book by Ms. Deng, who Murdoch said received an advance of ten or twenty thousand dollars, would benefit from promotional efforts that would be coördinated with News Corporation media outlets. Despite the meagre advance, Murdoch fêted Ms. Deng as if she were Tom Clancy. Last February, he attended a book party on the top floor of the Waldorf-Astoria sponsored by HarperCollins. He gave a private lunch for her at his ranch in Carmel. And he and his wife were hosts at a dinner for her in a private dining room at Le Cirque. There were six tables of eight, and among those who attended were Cyrus Vance and the Chinese Ambassadors to Washington and the United Nations. After a four-course meal, Murdoch rose and, a guest recalls, toasted Deng Xiaoping as "a man who had brought China into the modern world." This summer, Murdoch was confident enough of victory in China to have the News Corporation invest three hundred million dollars more to buy the thirty-six per cent of Star TV that it did not already own. In a further development that perhaps reflects Murdoch's solicitousness toward the Chinese government, in September HarperCollins dropped out of the bidding for a book by the Chinese-American human-rights activist Harry Wu, who is despised by the Chinese government.

Murdoch's decision to boot the BBC out of China was condemned as "the most seedy of betrayals" by Christopher Patten, the governor of Hong Kong. To espouse freedom of speech at home "but to curtail it elsewhere for reasons of inevitably short-term commercial expediency" was, he implied, immoral—or, at least, amoral. Some businessmen have defended Murdoch. "Being tough is sometimes confused with being amoral," Sumner Redstone says. "They are not the same thing. He's doing what he has to do to solve his problems with the Chinese government. He's being smart to do that." It's just business, in other words.

But some of Murdoch's colleagues demur. "When matters of principle and expediency clash with Rupert, expediency wins every time," says Frank Barlow, who, as the managing director of the London-based media conglomerate Pearson, is chairman of the *Financial Times* and oversees the Penguin publishing group. "I don't think we would have dumped the BBC. From time to time, the *Financial Times* gets banned in some countries. But



that doesn't alter our approach. We published the Salman Rushdie book. And stood behind Salman Rushdie." Joe Roth, who successfully ran the Fox studio for Murdoch and has called him a "visionary," nevertheless suggests that he can be coldly amoral. "I think of him in business as a guy who will do whatever he needs to do to get it done."

MURDOCH'S detachment can be traced to his childhood, in Australia. Sir Keith and Lady Elisabeth Murdoch, his parents, sent young Rupert to a boarding school, Geelong Grammar, near Melbourne, which featured military discipline, cadet parades, and occasional canings, and he rebelled against all of them. He was teased a lot at school, he recalls. "I was always a bit of an outsider. That undoubtedly came from my father and his position." Sir Keith ran a chain of newspapers, and the sons of the landed gentry at Geelong considered journalism a low-rent business. Asa Briggs, a social historian who was Murdoch's "moral tutor" at Oxford, recalls that Rupert "always had to have an enemy." Another strong emotion that goes back to his boyhood is a disdain for intimacy. "I learned early that getting very close to people can be dangerous if you're going to be in a position of public responsibility," Murdoch told me.

The lonely young rebel grew up to be a rebel capitalist. Murdoch's News Corporation is a large company run like a small one. A single individual makes big decisions, quickly, and for reasons he sometimes does not explain. For example, members of Murdoch's board have wondered about the dollar drain imposed by a favorite Murdoch toy, the New York *Post*. Murdoch himself says that this year the *Post* will lose "close to twenty million dollars"—a figure that will raise the net total losses Murdoch has endured in the thirteen years he has owned the paper to more than a hundred million dollars. Yet he wouldn't think of closing it. It offers a powerful political platform. And, besides, at heart he thinks of himself as a newspaperman.

As a manager, Murdoch employs an instinctual and hands-on style. He will plunge into one of his businesses for a week or two, focussing all his attention on it until he masters it. He has a minimal staff of experts and shuns formal meetings, preferring the telephone or one-on-

one encounters. In most cases, all that Murdoch requires from those who run his various properties is a one-page weekly financial report containing no narrative—just a recitation of expenditures and revenues, budgeted versus actual totals, and this year's revenues versus last year's.

There is no chief operating officer at the News Corporation. The board is composed of thirteen people, only three of whom are non-employees, non-consultants, or non-family members. George Vradenburg says, "He operates the company as a private, independent family company. And it has the strengths and the weaknesses of that. The strength is quick decisions. The weakness is that no one else has independent knowledge of what is going on in all of the company. Everyone is vulnerable to his health."

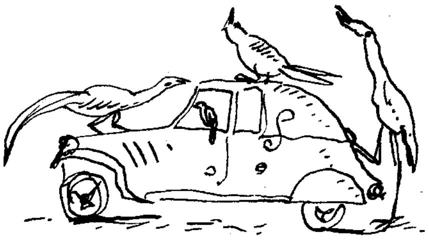
Murdoch delegates—except when he doesn't want to. He is clearly not as deeply engaged in the movies as he is in, say, *Post* headlines. "The long lead times frustrate him," says Peter Chernin, the chairman of Twentieth Century Fox. "It's hard to get him involved." Joe Roth, who preceded Chernin as the studio's chief, guesses that Murdoch reads maybe one script a year.

Murdoch's fabled do-it-alone impatience was one of several things that led the News Corporation to the precipice of bankruptcy in 1990. For example, Murdoch negotiated the nearly three-billion-dollar purchase of *TV Guide* from Walter Annenberg without calling on his lawyer, Howard Squadron, or his investment banker, Stanley Shuman.

Murdoch has had only one chief operating officer, Gus Fischer, and Fischer lasted only four years in that position. "He never told people in New York, 'You are now reporting to Gus.' It was difficult," recalls Fischer, who left the News Corporation in March and is now an independent entrepreneur. "I think he feels much more comfortable having someone who calls him if he wants to go to the bathroom. Don't get me wrong. I'm not saying this in a negative way, against Rupert. I'm just saying it's his style." While many executives have been with Murdoch for decades, there has been carnage near the top of the company. Murdoch, observes Joe Roth, who now runs the Disney studios, "makes you feel fungible." Even Barry Diller, whom Murdoch himself has credited with building the Fox network, was pushed out—despite denials at the time—when he asked for a larger slice of the company. Other Fox executives who "were feeling too proprietary," as Howard Squadron phrases it, also have gone.

Personally, Murdoch is a gentleman. He treats executives as part of his extended family: he invited them to his son Lachlan's engagement party, he remembers spouses' names, he rarely raises his voice. "He's not abusive," a senior News Corporation executive says. "But when he turns on you, it's"—he snaps a finger—"like that." In the past decade, Murdoch has had four deputies who appeared to be his No. 2—Donald Kummerfeld, Gus Fischer, Andrew Knight, and Richard Searby, the chairman of the board for ten years and a friend of fifty years.

When Sir Keith died, in 1952, the twenty-one-year-old Murdoch prepared to take over his father's business. The son had always thought of his father as a press lord, but in fact he had been employed by a newspaper chain; Sir Keith had owned only two newspapers, the Adelaide *News* and the Brisbane *Courier-Mail*, and the Brisbane paper was sold to pay taxes. So in 1953, when Rupert returned home from Oxford and a stint at a London paper, his empire consisted of a single newspaper with a daily circulation of under a hundred thousand. But before Murdoch was thirty he had acquired a number of newspapers and a TV station. He became a British press lord in early 1969, when he bested Robert Maxwell for the *News of the World*, a London Sunday tabloid with a circulation of approximately six million. Murdoch employed his charm to induce the Carr family, which had controlled the paper for nearly eighty years, to spurn a richer offer from Maxwell, whom the Carrs, like others, thought an odious man. Murdoch was seen as the safe choice, and he pledged to run the paper in partnership with the Carrs. But, as with so much of Murdoch's life, his acts are open to multiple interpretations. He argues that his pledge to the Carrs conflicted with his responsibility to shareholders. "It didn't take me long to realize that it was a total wreck of a company," he explains.



His treatment of the Carr family intensified an impression that would grow and forever shadow Murdoch: that his word is counterfeit, and he can't be trusted. The impression is widespread that people in journalism and business help him at a critical point and are then discarded. Eight years after he bought the *News of the World*, he started courting Dorothy Schiff, the owner of the *Post*. They had been brought together by Murdoch's friend Clay Felker, the editor and founder of *New York*. Murdoch induced her to sell the *Post* to him, and he transformed it from a dull liberal paper into a racy conservative one. Around that time, Felker confided to Murdoch that he was having difficulties with his board. Weeks later, Murdoch betrayed Felker by going behind his back and acquiring *New York*. Murdoch said at the time that the board wanted to sell the company, because it thought that Felker was profligate. Most of the editorial staff—including this writer—sided with Felker and quit.

The feeling that Murdoch is a betrayer has been heightened by shifts in his political position. The purchase of the London *Sun*, in 1969, for instance, roughly coincided with Murdoch's transformation from an Oxford leftist who had kept a bust of Lenin in his room into a passionate capitalist. The political epiphany came, he recalls, when he grappled with England's trade unions. "This sounds very subjective and selfish," he told me, "but living in Britain and having to handle fifteen print unions every night and wondering if your papers were going to come out—if anything could make you conservative, it was handling the British print unions as they were in those days." Not long after Murdoch bought the *Sun* and tarted it up with topless women and gossip posing as news, compelling the other tabloids to follow his lead, the editorial voice of the paper veered to the right, and by the end of the decade it had become a fight-to-the-death defender of Margaret Thatcher.

A Conservative had rarely had the editorial backing of a working-class English newspaper before the *Sun* supported Thatcher in the 1979 elections. "I believe we were right to support Thatcher in critical times when she had no other supporters," Murdoch says now. "I think what people don't understand about me is that I'm not just a businessman working in a very interesting industry. I am someone who's interested in ideas." Throughout the eighties Murdoch was protected by the Thatcher government in ways that were crucial to his business, most notably in the broadening of his base as a newspaper owner.

Despite his disdain for the establishment, Murdoch always wanted to own an influential newspaper—one read by the establishment. First, in 1976, he tried to buy the London *Observer*, but was rebuffed by journalists fearful of his reputation for political interference. Then, in 1981, he pulled off a spectacular coup, gaining control of the biggest quality weekly, the profitable *Sunday Times*, and also of the loss-making daily *Times*. Since he already owned the *Sun* and the weekly *News of the World*, it was expected that his bid would get mired in a protracted review by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, but a recommendation of a referral to the commission was overruled by the government on the ground that the papers would die if Murdoch wasn't allowed to save them.

The staffs of both the *Times* papers were seduced by a pledge that an independent board would approve the hiring and firing of editors and that Murdoch would not interfere in the editorial operations of the papers. In a year, however, the editor of the *Times*, Harold Evans (the husband of the editor of this magazine), was ousted by Murdoch. The paper became an editorial partisan for Thatcher.

Encouraged by the political climate that Thatcher had created, Murdoch audaciously schemed to break the stranglehold of the newspaper unions—whose contracts called for eighteen men on a printing press when only five or six were needed—by secretly building what came to be called Fortress Wapping, a modern printing plant and headquarters surrounded by tall fences topped with coils of razor wire. He carried out the Wapping gamble with military precision. While he was negotiating, he ordered computers and new printing presses to be installed and tested in an abandoned warehouse on the Thames, and when negotiations collapsed he stunned the unions by transporting this equipment to Wapping, along with non-union workers to operate it. When mayhem threatened and thousands of angry workers paraded outside, more than a thousand police were on hand to preserve law and order. Murdoch concedes that he could not have succeeded if Labour had been in power.

Although the Conservatives remain in power in England, Murdoch worries that the government will "screw" him—an expression he often uses.

Might his papers support the British Labour leader, Tony Blair?

Murdoch laughs. "We're not tied to any party," he says. "The big question with Tony Blair, who's very impressive, is what he will be allowed to do by his own party if he ever achieves power." In July, Murdoch flew Blair to Australia to speak at the News Corporation's weeklong management retreat, on Hayman Island. Unlike previous Labour leaders, Blair is prepared to entertain the deregulation of much of the communications business. Over cappuccino a few blocks from Parliament, one of Blair's associates said to me that although many Labour backbenchers had made a commitment to limit the percentage of broadcast outlets and newspapers that Murdoch could own, "I would be extremely surprised if that commitment was honored." What the Party is trying to do, the associate admits, is fudge the issue. Though this associate is privately critical of Murdoch's power, he says, "It would be absolutely mad for me to talk about Murdoch publicly." Blair's goal, he admits, is to get Murdoch's support, but the Party would be happy just to keep him neutral.

RUPERT MURDOCH is a bit of a prude—"I guess it's my Scottish blood," he says—and a conventional family man. The only photographs in his New York and California offices are of his family. He has four children: a daughter, Prudence, from his first marriage, and two sons and a daughter with his second wife, the former Anna Torv. Elisabeth, twenty-seven, is married to Elkin Pianim,

OF THE EVER-CHANGING AGITATION IN THE AIR

The man held his hands to his heart as he danced.
He slacked and swirled.
The doorways of the little city
blurred. Something
leaked out,
kindling the doorframes up,
making each entranceway
less true.
And darkness gathered
although it does not fall . . . And the little dance,
swinging this human all down the alleyway,
nervous little theme pushing itself along,
braiding, rehearsing,
constantly incomplete so turning and tacking—
oh what is there to finish?—his robes made rustic by the reddish swirl,
which grows darker towards the end of the avenue of course,
one hand on his chest,
one flung out to the side as he dances, taps, sings,
on his scuttling toes, now humming a little,
now closing his eyes as he twirls, growing smaller,
why does the sun rise? remember me always dear for I will
return—
liberty spooring in the evening air,
into which the lilacs open, the skirts uplift,
liberty and the blood-eye careening gently over the giant earth,
and the cat in the doorway who does not mistake the world,
eying the spots where the birds must eventually land—

—JORIE GRAHAM

a Ghanaian whom she met in college. Until recently, the couple owned two TV stations in northern California. Lachlan, twenty-four, joined the News Corporation last year and is based in Australia. And James, twenty-two, has completed his junior year at Harvard and has dropped out to start a record company with two friends. Anna Murdoch is thirteen years younger than Rupert. They met when she was a cub reporter on Murdoch's *Daily Mirror* in Australia. Today, she is a novelist, and serves on the News Corporation board. Their son James says, "I don't know of any confidant other than my mother. I couldn't imagine him going to anyone but my mother. She's as tough as nails." She is also more conservative than her husband. A devout Catholic, she is implacably opposed to abortion and thinks it should be illegal; he does not (though he would eliminate federal funding). "She doesn't like 'The Simpsons,' " Murdoch says. "I think it's brilliant." She voted for George Bush in 1992, he recalls, while he voted for Ross Perot, as a protest. Today, she favors Bob Dole for President, while Murdoch likes Colin Powell. "He appears to be a man of very fine character," Murdoch says. "I agree with a lot of what he says."

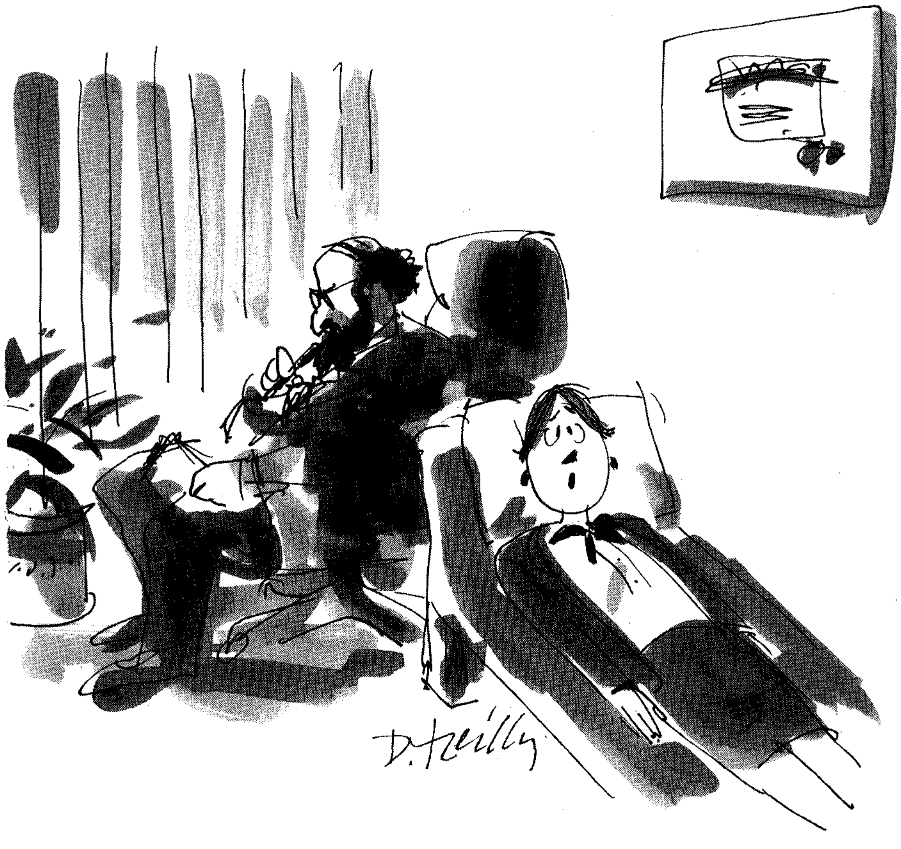
Murdoch's family values and taste have rarely interfered with what goes on in the pages of his papers or in his television programming. The sexually raunchy shows are manufactured rather cynically. "I wouldn't let a thirteen-year-old watch 'Melrose Place,' " Murdoch admits. Yet Fox not only broadcasts "Melrose Place" but has shifted it from 9 P.M. to 8 P.M., the traditional children's hour. Murdoch introduced tabloid TV news magazines to America in 1986, with "A Current Affair," on Fox, encouraging others to follow him and to push the envelope, as they say, of bad taste. "He's confirmed the suspicion that shit sells," a former network president observes.

Prurience, whether manifested by the bare-breasted women who appear daily on page 3 of the *Sun*, and who are referred to as "*Sun* lovelies," or the sexual escapades of politicians or the Royal Family, is a staple of Murdoch's newspapers. This summer, for example, the New York *Post* got a lot of mileage out of pillorying Judge Kimba Wood for allegedly having a romance with a married investment banker. The Kimba Wood story passed three Murdoch tabloid tests. First, he says, "it's a soap opera," an entertaining spectacle. Second, it fuels envy and resentment—and thus circulation—because it's about "high society," as he calls it. It tells the little people how the other half lives—repressed-schoolmarm judge likes sex! Third, it displays what Anthea Disney, who has worked on Murdoch's London tabloids and now serves as a top Murdoch executive, calls a "visceral" Fleet Street attitude of rebellion against social pretense. She also edited *TV Guide* for four years, and she recalls that Murdoch would always say to his editors, "Do you think this is too upmarket? Do you think it should be more mass?" Kimba Wood was "mass."

There was another reason the Kimba Wood tale pleased Murdoch, he confesses: "She put my friend in jail for ten years." Wood presided over the trial of the investment banker Michael Milken, sentencing him to a stiff ten years in jail for securities fraud (but allowing him to serve only two in return for coöperating with authorities). Murdoch has been loyal to Milken. Last spring, Milken was retained as a consultant in a deal in which MCI committed two billion dollars to the News Corporation; and "Payback: The Conspiracy to Destroy Michael Milken and His Financial Revolution," by Daniel Fischel, was published recently by HarperCollins and excerpted in the *Post*.

Murdoch's journalism follows a pattern. When he plunged into editing the *News of the World*, in 1969, he immediately applied lessons he had learned as a subeditor at Lord Beaverbrook's *Daily Express* the year after he graduated from Oxford. Murdoch believes that a paper—particularly a working-class paper—has to be "fun," a form of entertainment. The true public trust is to give the public what it wants. "Populism" and commerce drove Murdoch's papers to invade the bedrooms of the Royal Family and to print jingoistic headlines, and populism combined with commerce accounts for the introduction of softer features in both the *Sunday Times* and the *Times* after he took them over.

But is what Murdoch's tabloids do so different from what tabloids have traditionally done in England? "I think it's fair to say that the British don't have the same sense of dignity about the press that Americans have," says Roger Laughton, who spent much of his career at the BBC and is today the C.E.O. of Meridian Broadcasting. "The British press is far more competitive, and very professional,



"I'm a little teapot, still."

but I wouldn't say it has a range of ethical considerations that it takes into account. That predates Murdoch. He didn't behave out of character with the way the press operated here, or in Australia. Others have tried to do the same many times in the past. That's what being a press baron implied."

Certainly Murdoch's products do not speak with one voice. The *Australian*—Australia's first national daily newspaper, which he launched, and, he told me, nurtured for twenty years, until it turned profitable—was used as a political weapon in the 1972 and 1975 national elections, but it is a respectable publication today. As are the daily and *Sunday Times*. Nor are Murdoch's politics as simple as the conventional view of him suggests. He is, for example, a fiery advocate of law and order, yet a quiet opponent of the death penalty. "It brutalizes society," he explains, echoing an objection often lodged against his newspapers.

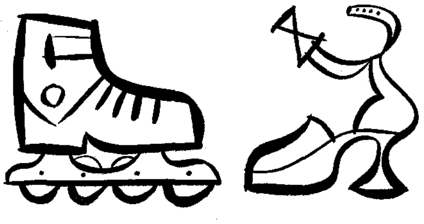
Murdoch has not tried to insert his conservative views into his movies or television, according to Hollywood associates. This is not true of his approach to news. "He never called me and said, 'Don't do a story.' Or 'Do a story,' " recalls the former Fox News executive producer David Corvo, who is now a vice-president of NBC News. "But once, when I went over the list of network contracts coming up—Bryant Gumbel, Leslie Stahl, Steve Kroft, and so on—he just brushed them off. I felt that he wanted a conservative. I don't know how you build a credible news division with an agenda."

Murdoch believes that his critics do what he does, the difference being that they're hypocrites and he's not. He complains that reporters for the *Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*, for instance, "write more subjectively" than reporters do in England. He seems suspicious of anyone who proclaims journalism a calling. "Journalism has been mistaken over the past two decades for some kind of profession," says one of Murdoch's favorite journalists, Steve Dunleavy, who has worked for him on many continents since 1967. "We're not doctors. We're not lawyers. We're not architects. It's not a profession. It's a craft. We're the same as carpenters or mechanics."

But Murdoch is not a traditional press baron. Frank Barlow points out the difference: "I don't think there was ever any suggestion that the old press barons received any benefit for their businesses. Maybe because they weren't in any other businesses. Now it is not unusual to read that Murdoch gets benefits." This goes to the heart of the critique of Murdoch's journalism: too often, it becomes the servant of his political or commercial interests. What gives him the most pleasure in all his empire, Murdoch told me, is this: "Being involved with the editor of a paper in a day-to-day campaign. Trying to influence people." Barry Diller says, "Rupert is a pure conservative, except for purposes of manipulation."

Murdoch's papers do influence people, and he has used this influence to support political figures, who may then be in his debt. The *Sun* made Thatcher acceptable to its working-class readers. His Australian newspapers have influenced elections. Reporters on both the *Australian* and the New York *Post* protested in the seventies that Murdoch used their news pages to reward favored candidates and to savage those he disliked. The *Post* helped elect the current Republican mayor of New York City and governor of New York State, and the state's Republican and Democratic senators. When the new governor, George Pataki, wanted to meet with corporate leaders after his election last year, he asked Murdoch to act as host of the meeting. When Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's wife, Donna Hanover, was rehired as a TV reporter, it was Murdoch's Fox-owned station—WNYW—that recruited her.

MURDOCH nearly lost his empire in 1990, when he was on the edge of bankruptcy, and another threat surfaced in late 1993. The New York chapter of the N.A.A.C.P. filed a petition charging that Murdoch had misled the F.C.C. in 1985, when he was launching the Fox network. Federal law stipulates that a foreign citizen cannot own more than one-quarter of a broadcast station's capital stock, and it was then that Murdoch changed his nationality, becoming an American citizen. But a tenacious volunteer lawyer for the N.A.A.C.P., David Honig, discovered while digging through Fox's applications for station licenses that although Murdoch himself had seventy-six-per-cent voting control over Fox, his Australian holding company, the News Corporation, indirectly owned more than ninety-nine per cent of the equity of its stations. Thus, the N.A.A.C.P. claimed, Fox had exceeded the foreign-ownership limit, thereby depriving minority Americans of an opportunity to bid for a broadcast license.

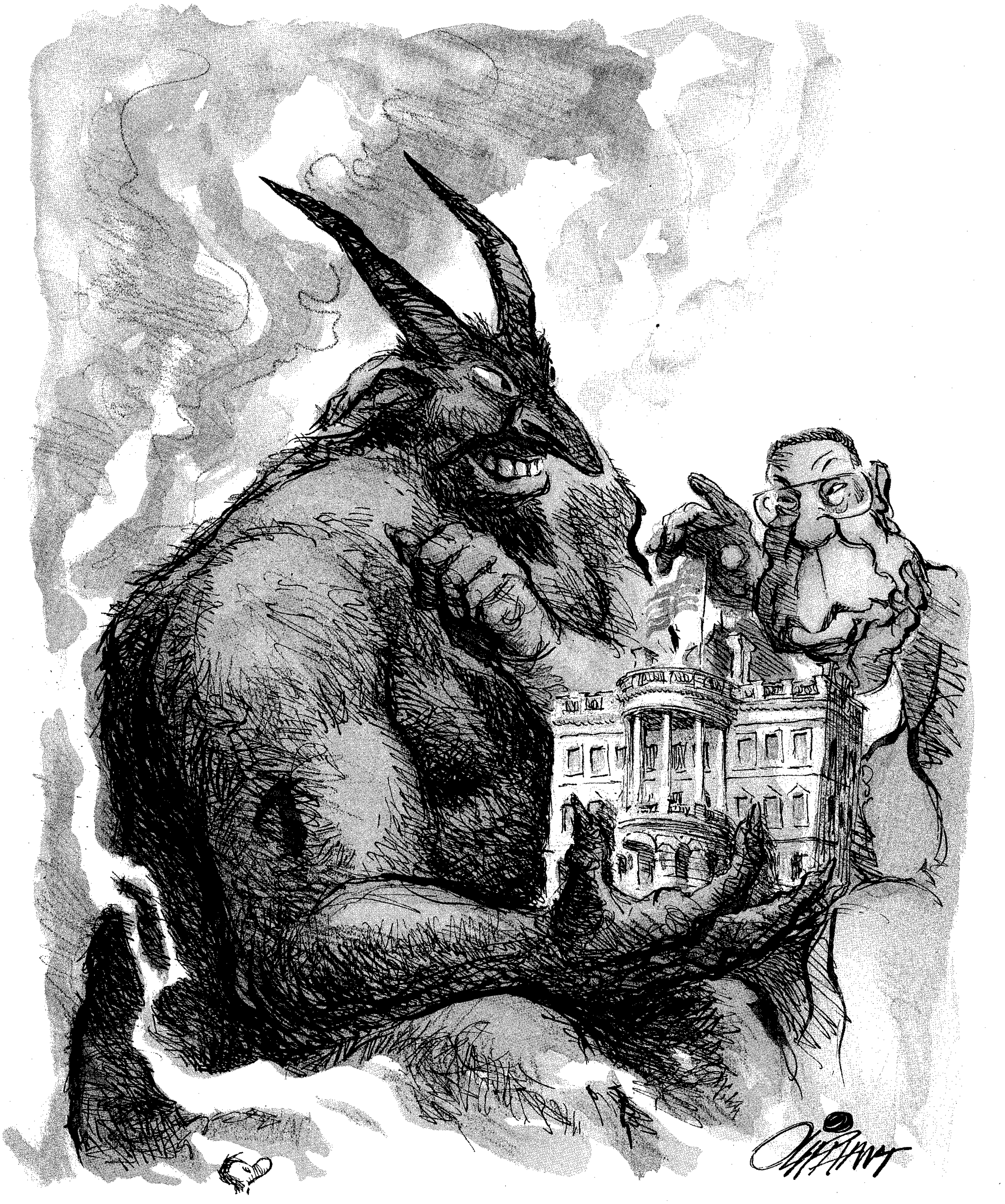


Murdoch viewed the N.A.A.C.P. allegations, Preston Padden notes, "as a minor irritation." It wasn't until the fall of 1994, when NBC filed a similar petition, that he began to fret that it was more than a nuisance. NBC charged that all of Murdoch's 1985 station-license applications were false. This was war. Murdoch directed strategy meetings, edited press releases, and camped with Padden in Washington and visited members of the key congressional committees. "We were not asking anybody to do anything," says Padden. "Our pitch was 'This outburst by NBC was because they didn't like competition in the marketplace.' " It was the O.J. defense: us versus them.

Although Murdoch has never been a major financial contributor to politicians, he bet heavily on a Republican victory in 1994. In the months after the election, and so far without attracting much notice, a subsidiary of Murdoch's News Corporation—an entity that had never made a soft-money contribution—donated a total of two hundred thousand dollars to the Republican House and Senate Campaign Committees. According to Fred Wertheimer, the former president of Common Cause, this dwarfed contributions made previously by any of Murdoch's companies. "These guys haven't played the Washington game that much," Wertheimer says of Murdoch and his people. "But they know it's a candy store. There's an awful lot to be purchased." Immediately after the election, Padden arranged for Murdoch to visit a total of seventeen public officials, including eight Democrats. One of the first visits was with Speaker-elect Gingrich. "It was a ten-minute meeting—maximum," Murdoch says. "We met in the hall, because there were too many people in his office. It was just chitchat. We talked about the chances of his getting his Contract with America passed." Padden, who was also present, says, "None of their conversation had anything to do with this business." Then he adds, "I piped up at the end to

SKETCHBOOK · BY PAT OLIPHANT

THE TEMPTATION OF ST. COLIN



PLAYING THE YOUTH CARD
SOCCER
GREEN DAY
Overall, I think a happy childhood is more important than the table's being set, wouldn't you agree?
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
R. Chast

say that NBC was going after us." However brief this part of the conversation was, it was initially denied by a Gingrich spokesman, who said that neither NBC nor any other matter before the F.C.C. or before Congress was discussed.

One month after this hallway encounter, it was revealed that Gingrich had signed a two-book contract with HarperCollins worth four and a half million dollars, likely the largest book advance ever received by an officeholder and the third-largest advance ever received by an American public figure. Murdoch denied that he knew anything about Gingrich's book contract. "I was telephoned in Beijing on Christmas Eve and told that it had happened," he says. "Howard Rubenstein called me. I went crazy. I knew critics would explode." Gingrich denied knowing that Murdoch was connected to HarperCollins. The denials did not quiet the Democrats or the editorials. It was unseemly for a public official to take such an advance, and Gingrich implicitly acknowledged this when he belatedly announced that he would accept no advance and would take only royalties that the book actually earned. The most charitable interpretation is that there was an appearance of conflict for Gingrich to receive such a large amount of money from a company with business before Congress; the least charitable is that it was a bribe.

HarperCollins has a history of signing book deals with leaders of countries that the News Corporation has a commercial interest in—from Margaret Thatcher to Deng's daughter, from Mikhail and Raisa Gorbachev to Boris Yeltsin, from a Saudi prince to Dan Quayle. And in some cases (those of Thatcher and Gorbachev) Murdoch actually negotiated the deals. But it is possible that Murdoch was not told ahead of time of the Gingrich book deal. William Shinker, a former publisher of HarperCollins, says the C.E.O. of HarperCollins, George Craig, had the authority to approve payments of that size without clearing the decision with Murdoch. Murdoch says he has since amended the policy; now he must personally sign off on any advance above a million dollars.

Murdoch wrote a letter to the F.C.C. chairman, Reed Hundt, in December in which he expressed "personal anguish" about the storm surrounding his motives and declared that he was an American citizen and exercised "de facto control of the News Corporation and all its businesses." He felt mistreated by the establishment, and in his deposition to the F.C.C. he said he felt that the agency would be playing a game of "semantics" if it counted News Corporation equity as foreign ownership but did not count Murdoch's voting control of the stock as American ownership. It was, he said, "a witch hunt." Republicans agreed. Larry Pressler, the chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, and Jack Fields, the chairman of the House telecommunications subcommittee, began making calls to the F.C.C. lambasting the Democrats for picking on Murdoch and Fox. Fields threatened a "top to bottom" review of the F.C.C. if Murdoch was persecuted further. The conservative Heritage Foundation issued a paper on rolling back regulations in which it urged the abolition of the F.C.C.

Murdoch was crafty, but he may have been lucky as well. In January, Apstar-2, the satellite that NBC had counted on to distribute its programs in Asia, blew up shortly after liftoff. A month later, NBC, which had accused Murdoch of making craven deals to advance his interests, made a craven deal with Murdoch: NBC withdrew its F.C.C. petition in return for a lease of two channels on Murdoch's Star satellite system.

By spring, the tide had turned in Murdoch's favor, and he knew it. On the morning, in May, when the F.C.C. was to rule, he arrived forty minutes early at the hearing room where the decision was to be announced, flanked by his photogenic wife, Anna, and his daughter Elisabeth and her husband. Murdoch had in his hand a statement thanking the commissioners for exonerating him and Fox from the charge that they had "lacked candor." When the Murdochs took seats in the second row, Preston Padden leaned over to them. "The commissioner has arranged for you to sit in the first row," he whispered. A phalanx of photographers snapped pictures of Anna Murdoch patting the shoulder of her husband's navy-blue double-breasted suit and straightening his red-and-blue polka-dot tie. The five commission members filed in and listened as the F.C.C. general counsel, William Kennard, announced that although the foreign ownership of Fox did exceed twenty-five per cent, the evidence did not support a conclusion that Fox misled the F.C.C., and that an American citizen—Rupert Murdoch—did indeed control the parent News Corporation. Moreover, Murdoch was invited to apply for a "public interest" exemption from the regulations requiring Fox to restructure its equity, and he promptly did so.

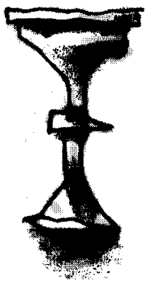
Murdoch was jubilant. David Honig, of the N.A.A.C.P., was not. His view of the ruling was this: "The process was tainted. I think they threw the Communications Act in the garbage. Murdoch's Republican cohorts blackmailed the F.C.C. by threatening its existence." Others marvelled at Murdoch's political dexterity. "I wish we could be as successful as he's been," Sumner Redstone says.

A FEW days after the F.C.C. ruling, MCI announced that it was investing two billion dollars in a thirteen-per-cent stake in the News Corporation, and not long before Murdoch had revealed that he would finance a new conservative magazine, the *Weekly Standard*, based in Washington and edited by William Kristol. He acquired a hundred-per-cent ownership of Star TV, and he anointed his son Lachlan its deputy chairman. In August, he combined Delphi, his Internet operation, with MCI's Internet operation. The same month, he raised fifty thousand dollars at a "21" fund-raising lunch for the Senate Commerce Committee chairman, Larry Pressler. Last week, in addition to concluding a sports link with Malone, Fox launched a children's-television venture with Saban Entertainment. This week, Fox and NBC expect to announce that they have acquired the rights to televise major-league baseball.

In recent days, Murdoch has concluded that he could probably not bring off a takeover of Time Warner at this point, but the mere fact that he contemplated it is testimony to his extraordinary bravado. He would enjoy claiming Warner Bros., with its huge film library, and HBO, and Time's various magazines.

The Time Warner-Turner merger—like Murdoch's expansion—has fuelled the debate over whether media behemoths like the News Corporation and Time Warner will monopolize the production and distribution of information and entertainment. Murdoch would argue that, in the long run, no one will be able to monopolize information. Eventually, even in China, customers will be able to bypass middlemen like Murdoch or the government and summon to their TVs, computers, or telephone screens any news source, any channel, any desired program. It would be difficult for any entity to screen E-mail or books or newspapers downloaded from one computer to another. Technology makes it possible for every citizen (who can afford a computer and a high-speed modem) to become a publisher. Those who fret about monopolies are seen as being trapped in a time warp, railing against past dangers. If government regulators try to impose new anti-monopoly rules, they risk suffocating the world's fastest-growing industry.

On the other side of the argument are arrayed those who believe that Murdoch approaches a monopoly, certainly in Australia and in England. News Corporation newspapers control more than fifty per cent of the daily and Sunday circulation in Australia and a third of the United Kingdom's national newspaper circulation. As part of a deal with Murdoch's BSkyB, TCI entered into a partnership with US West to carry Murdoch's programming on cable in the U.K. By making long-term deals with all the major Hollywood studios for movies, and by using Fox programming, BSkyB dominates most of the product and the chief means of reaching pay-TV customers in the U.K.



A traditional objection to a monopoly is that it restrains trade in order to control markets. When the distributor also owns the product distributed, conflicts arise. For example, it has been charged that before American cable companies like TCI and Time Warner would give channel space to CNBC, they insisted that it provide only business news, so as not to compete directly with CNN. Media companies, which are becoming entangled in local politics and multiple partnerships, are heading inexorably toward their own version of global *keiretsu*, the informal back-scratching system used by Japanese companies.

The issue of monopolies and what to do about telecommunications legislation will be discussed this week in Washington as nine House and eleven Senate members confer on how to reconcile bills passed in each chamber. On the agenda are matters of momentous significance for communication companies like Murdoch's News Corporation. Among them: Should broadcasters like Murdoch be allowed to own stations reaching thirty-five per cent of American viewers, or should the limit stay at twenty-five per cent? Should broadcasters like Murdoch have to bid on extra channels that technology will make available, or should this extra spectrum space be a gift to existing broadcasters? Should cross-ownership restrictions be lifted, allowing a broadcaster like Murdoch to own a newspaper in the same market where he owns a TV station?

Whether the News Corporation is a monoply or not, Murdoch wants to keep it a family company. "Lachlan is only twenty-four," Murdoch points out. "He's a young man. Certainly he is conducting himself well. His sister Lis is very keen on coming back into the company. Soon, I hope. I think James is undecided. He's determined to do his own thing. I took all three out to our management conference." To turn over the News Corporation to his young, untested children presupposes three things: that Murdoch will remain in charge perhaps another ten years, allowing them to gain valuable experience; that if he cannot stay another decade Anna Murdoch might be installed as C.E.O. for a period of time; and, finally, that a public company board would deem a family member a suitable replacement.

Murdoch believes he has built things that will endure. Still, while the Fox network and Sky and Star TV provide viewers with more choices, they are rarely better choices. Unlike the Sulzbergers or the Grahams, William Paley, or Henry Luce—no matter their many flaws and sometimes outrageous vices—Murdoch will leave no monument except a successful corporation. He has boldly built a worldwide company, but he has rarely elevated taste or journalism. Competitors envy Murdoch's financial success and his bold vision, and politicians fear his power, but the News Corporation is a business that relies on a singular man who is now in his sixty-fifth year. Rupert Murdoch has created a much bigger empire than his father did, but his success may be just as fleeting. "I believe," Roger Laughton says, "that we're talking about Genghis Khan, not the Roman Empire." ◆

A CRITIC AT LARGE

THE STORY OF A VOICE

The legend persists that Maria Callas destroyed her own voice for the sake of vanity and café society. But recordings that have only recently become available confirm that what she really sacrificed herself to was the music.

BY WILL CRUTCHFIELD

If only Maria Callas hadn't got mixed up with Ari and Jackie, we would be less aware of her life after singing, and that would be better. The most celebrated operatic soprano of the twentieth century, unable to find peace or purpose in her twelve years of premature retirement and unable to rehabilitate herself as a performer, wound up an overmedicated recluse in Paris, a city that never knew her in her prime. By the time she died there, in 1977, at the age of fifty-three, her career had long since ebbed into fitful and mostly unfulfilled comeback projects, and her fame—the pure, resonant fame of noble achievement—had been admixed with notoriety. The stormy, capricious diva who abandoned husband and stage for a seductive billionaire, only to be dumped in favor of a President's widow, attained a level of name recognition that singing in opera could never have brought.

Within the opera house, Callas mattered in a way no opera singer had since Fyodor Chaliapin and none has yet mattered after her. She was not just celebrated and dominant in her field but permanently influential and artistically important in it. She achieved in her singing a level of musicality and technical capacity which places her among the greatest musicians (in any genre) of the century; she acted her roles with a physical eloquence that impressed audiences deeply; she restored to circulation a body of operatic literature that had lacked a commanding exponent for many years; and, finally, she gave a stunning example—unprecedented, at least in this century—of a major singer going to pieces vocally in mid-career.

This last has added such tragic fascination to the human story of Callas that it is difficult to disentangle her art from her life, and tempting to conflate the two. Few of her twenty-odd biographers and none of the documentary filmmakers have evaded the temptation. In an age when we can watch our wealthier contemporaries live out their tawdry fates on television, it is possible to lose track of just what tragic art has to offer besides the bald presentation of a life that will provoke pity or Schadenfreude. But some new materials can help. Callas's surviving television footage has been released to the public over the past several years, as have crucial recordings long known only to specialists, and in pirate form. If the arts have any importance beyond that of ushering successful individuals into the chamber of voyeurism, it is worthwhile to rescue Callas from her chroniclers.

Maria Callas was born in New York City, to George and Evangelia Kalogeropoulos, recent immigrants from Greece, in December of 1923. When her mother returned to Greece in 1937, Maria went along, and began studying music at the National Conservatory, in Athens. Her childhood was unhappy in a fairly typical way—she was overweight and quarrelled often with her ambitious mother—and music was the center of her emotional life from early on. She would listen all day to the lessons of the other students and then borrow opera scores and learn them at night. By the age of sixteen, she had her first contract, with the national Lyric Theatre; at eighteen, she sang Tosca, and until 1945 she appeared in roles large and small in Athens and Salonika. In the fall of that year, she returned to New York, and she spent most of 1946 studying and auditioning; by the spring of 1947, she had landed a first-class Italian début engagement, in "La Gioconda," at the Arena of Verona. There she found herself among leading singers, under the wing of one of the greatest old Italian maestros, Tullio Serafin, and supported by a wealthy Veronese industrialist, Giovanni Battista Meneghini, who became her manager, her lover, and, eventually, her husband.

Callas's success at the Arena was instantaneous, and over the next five years a modern miracle revealed itself on the main Italian stages. This part of the story has been told often and well: how the agility, volume, and expressiveness of her singing caused excitement everywhere, while the actual sound of her voice—which was unusual and in some ways unbeautiful—occasioned differences of opinion; how her repertory, which consisted originally of heavy dramatic roles (Gioconda, Isolde, Turandot, Brünnhilde, and Aida), began to include virtuosic bel-canto parts (Bellini's Elvira and Norma) that had not in living memory been sung with such command; and how her strong stage presence announced unmistakably the arrival of a major new operatic artist.

In the season of 1951-52, after triumphs up and down the peninsula, Callas established herself as prima donna at Milan's La Scala, and made it her home theatre. For seven seasons, the house surrounded her with illustrious colleagues, conductors, directors, and designers, in revivals that were the news of the musical world. In familiar and unknown operas alike, Callas's work almost always became the focus of the world's thoughts about that role, and Callas herself became a celebrity. Then, in 1959, she went into sudden near-retirement, took up with Aristotle Onassis, and began the long professional and personal decline that still occasions deep regret and furious debate. Callas had been averaging fifty appearances a year; between her thirty-sixth and fortieth birthdays she sang in public only twenty-eight times. There was a flurry of troubled performances in 1964-65, and then silence until a disastrous concert tour in 1973-74.

Only one good decade, really. Callas's entire stage career (excluding the Greek

Maria Callas photographed by Horst in New York in 1952. She could imagine almost anything, and give voice to it.

Callas rehearsing Verdi in 1951, when she established herself as La Scala's prima donna.

years) comprised just five hundred and thirty-nine performances. Enrico Caruso, who died at forty-eight, gave nearly two thousand. Chaliapin, one of the various singers who "invented" acting in opera before Callas "invented" it, made his début in 1890, and was still touring, recording, and singing gorgeously in 1937, just months before his death. The only other musician in this century to make anything like Callas's impact in so few appearances was the Canadian pianist Glenn Gould. Both of them—like Chaliapin, Caruso, Arturo Toscanini, and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau—permanently changed the way their successors understood the music they were most closely associated with. But Callas brought this about largely by conservative means, through the affirmation of tradition. Gould and the others were revolutionaries; she never was.

CALLAS presented to the Italian public a phenomenon of sheer capacity, and she revived a repertory based on capacity. High notes and low, power in full cry and delicacy in pianissimo, fast passagework and sustained legato had not been completely present in one soprano in generations. The most discriminating musician, whose interest might not have been held by stupendous athletic feats but whose ear was sensitive to minute gradations of rhythm and phrasing, found an ideal in Callas at the same moment that fans of larger-than-life excitement were finding an idol in her. And neophytes, who may not have recognized any of these qualities but were open to a deep dramatic expressiveness, fell under her spell. For many, she was (and, through her records, remains) both the reason for and the means of learning to love opera itself.

We can hear why from the first of her complete opera performances to be preserved on tape—a dim Neapolitan recording of Verdi's "Nabucco" from the end of 1949. Callas, playing Abigaille, the warrior daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, enters at the head of an army and opens with threats and taunts, exploiting powerful low notes, high ones flung out over the full force of the orchestra, and, at the end of her first speech, two coruscating roulades, racing down from high A and high B. Then, in an aside of softly pleading melody, she begs the enemy youth she secretly loves to turn away all this force by responding to her desire.

ERIC PICCAGLIANI/TEATRO ALLA SCALA, MILANO

The singing is breathtaking. The roulades show some of the qualities that set her apart in difficult music. She requires no gradual acceleration to start the first scale in its rapid motion; it moves like lightning, yet every note is thrillingly distinct. In the second, she negotiates the turn at the bottom of the run without even touching the brakes, and vaults up again like a rocket. The tone is charged with expressive force—and what an excitingly big voice it is as it surmounts the orchestral tutti! In the pleading trio, she begins with haunting smoothness, yet finds a still more tender tone for the central line: *"Ah, se m'ami, ancor potrei il tuo popolo salvar"* ("Ah, if you love me, I could spare your people yet").

A startling confidence is at work here, for in Naples, as in so many other early performances that survive, Callas's surroundings offered no encouragement for subtlety. To the orchestra and the other soloists, that "Nabucco" trio is just one more hearty generic sing; but this twenty-six-year-old American who is still making her name has the nerve to create an interior atmosphere, to live in the mood she has established in the opening line, even though it means being outshouted by the others in her very first scene. Throughout her career, she kept this courage to sing softly—to *assume* she would be heard, even when there was great practical danger of the contrary. She dominated by occupying a calm, quiet center. She gets no help, but she doesn't stand around waiting for any. Help would throw itself at her feet soon enough.

WHAT Callas was helping to restore was once the most popular music in the world: the operatic repertory of Italy in the first half of the nineteenth century—the *primo ottocento*, as the Italians call it. This was the heady moment when Classical virtuosity, inherited from the brilliant vocal rhetoricians of the eighteenth century, coexisted with high Romanticism. The novels of Walter Scott, the poetry of Byron, the music of Beethoven: the younger Italian poets and composers took all these like drugs, and the operas they created swept back over Europe and the world. Callas's core repertory came from this school, which reaches from the serious operas of Rossini (she sang one, "Armida") through Bellini and Donizetti, to "Il Trovatore" and "La Traviata," where Verdi, already striking out on new paths, drew for the last time on the full expressive vocabulary of his predecessors. Bellini's Norma was Callas's most frequent role, followed by Verdi's Violetta and Donizetti's Lucia; more than half her stage career was devoted to music composed in the narrow span from 1830 to 1853.

With opera moving on in symphonic and naturalistic directions, the decline of the Classical bel-canto skills was inevitable, and by 1900 most of the great operas of the *primo ottocento* were forgotten. The few that remained in repertory tended to be treated as tired relics, or as surefire comedies and romances that would play themselves (in shamelessly cut and edited versions), while serious artistic effort was focussed elsewhere. Some of the light sopranos kept the bel-canto skills flickeringly alive. But there had been nothing like Callas's alacrity and speed since about 1910, and what there had been then came with the haphazardness of a discipline no longer valued and slipping into disuse.

Callas had all the exactitude and purpose of a valiant restorer. She had mastered more fully than almost any of her Italian contemporaries the art of legato and portamento ("carrying" the voice smoothly from note to note), and she had an extraordinarily lambent projection, which allowed every word to tell without overpronunciation. Her concentrated focus of tone allowed every gradation of softness to carry through the hall, every minute manipulation of rhythm to register. In every role, on practically every page, there were phrases that Callas was able to trace with a calligrapher's pen where audiences had become accustomed to a carpenter's pencil.

VERDI'S "Macbeth," which Callas revived at La Scala in 1952, was one of her revelations. (The broadcast is finally available in a legal recorded edition, Angel/EMI 64944.) Tales of the great nineteenth-century singers abound in accounts of single words or phrases so filled with artistry and spirit that they leave listeners shaken and lives changed. Sometimes it sounds a little mystical—really, all that in one word? So it is good to have an example preserved on record. Callas needs only one syllable. When Macbeth returns trembling from the room where he has murdered sleep, the Lady takes charge of his faltering courage: he hears someone approaching, yet seems rooted to the spot; she launches the allegro of their duet with the single word "*Vien!*"—"Come!" It's a short note on middle F, and, as voiced by Callas, it contains the tactical decision to leave quickly rather than be discovered; a sense of contempt for her husband's vacillation; and a tinge of flushed anxiety on her part for the enormity of the situation.

What can be analyzed here? A sound that is strong but faintly hesitant; a certain intake of breath. There is little to describe. When the artist's vision is profound, things beyond analysis emerge. It is chilling. All evening long, right through to the unearthly sleepwalking scene, Callas seems possessed by the character. What could she not imagine, and what not voice? In Bellini's "Norma" she embraced a musical challenge as daunting as Chopin's Ballades and a dramatic part that spans political authority, religious charisma, sororal generosity, murderous depression, and eventual transcendence and self-sacrifice. As Callas sang the role in Milan, it stood revealed as one of the greatest tragic creations in any art form and an operatic portrait as complete and perfect as Verdi's Otello, Wagner's Wotan, Moussorgsky's Boris, or Mozart's Countess.

During the Scala years, Callas also effected the physical transformation that had all Milan gaping: between December, 1952, and April, 1954, she shed sixty-two pounds, and showed off her new twenty-two-inch waistline in two revivals that were her most delirious successes with the Milanese public. In magnificently costumed productions, rehearsed by Luchino Visconti in painstaking detail, the grand tragedienne of Medea and Norma turned to the tender and vulnerable heroines of "La Sonnambula" and "La Traviata." Leonard Bernstein and Carlo Maria Giulini conducted. "La Traviata" was so successful that this repertory staple was jinxed for La Scala: it was not attempted again for eight years, and then, when a Karajan-Zeffirelli-Freni production was booed off the stage after two performances, not again for a quarter century. The climax of Callas's Scala seasons came with Donizetti's "Anna Bolena," in 1957, and Bellini's "Il Pirata," in 1958. These were true exhumations—works that had disappeared a century before and thus carried no tradition, no beloved hit arias, no foreknowledge whatever in the public or the press. They were productions that staked everything on the inherent qualities of the *primo ottocento* school and on Callas as its advocate, and they succeeded beyond all possible expectation. Both "Bolena" and "Pirata" contain passionate scenes of confrontation, in which Callas showed that the glories of "Norma" and "Lucia" were not isolated but emblematic of a great body of work. And in the poignant lyrical solos she concentrated her melodic gift at its purest. In the quickening and hesitating, the weighting and lightening of the voice, the slurring together or separation of the notes, she proposed—or reclaimed—a sphere for the exercise of genius, a source of musical richness to be compared with Schubert's shifting harmonies or Debussy's orchestral colors.

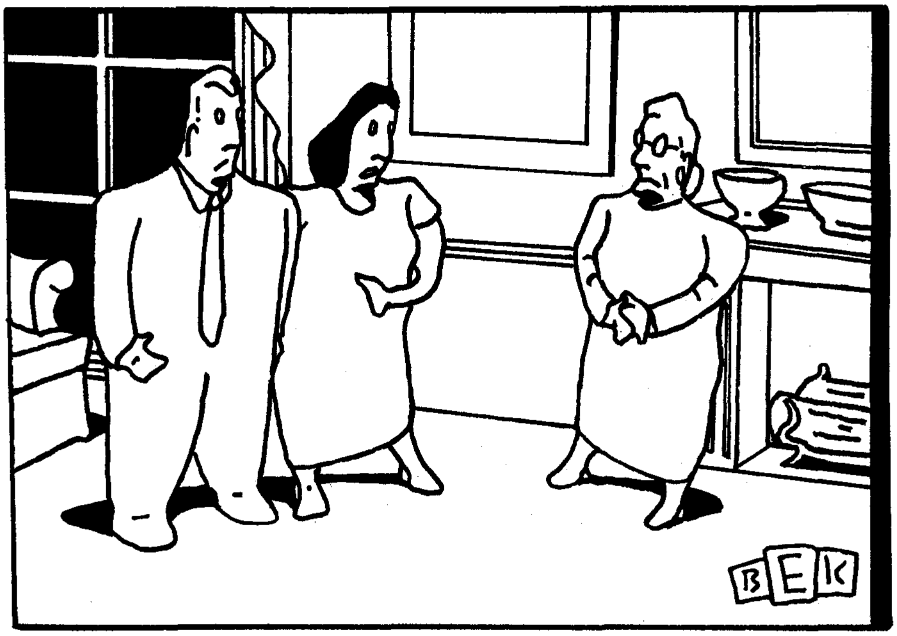
Since the revival in 1957, "Anna Bolena" has been done by Elena Souliotis, Leyla Gencer, Renata Scotto, Montserrat Caballé, Joan Sutherland, Beverly Sills, Katia Ricciarelli, and Edita Gruberova, among others. These singers have also sung other roles that Callas revived, and dozens more *primo ottocento* works have followed. No other segment of the "lost" operatic repertory has achieved anything like this circulation—not the verismo school, not Gluck, Handel, or Monteverdi, not the French Baroque, not the Second Empire lyricists. And all these singers have responded to the challenge embodied in Callas's technical mastery. We do not, in 1995, marvel at a soprano who can sound the written notes with basic accuracy and elegance at the end of Act I in "La Traviata," because we have heard several of the above-mentioned singers do so. But this renewal of respect for a certain standard has come in the wake of Callas; almost all the Violettas who were her predecessors or close contemporaries left records to prove that they could *not* meet such a requirement.

Today, Romantic opera is the hottest topic in musicology; Rossini, Verdi, and Donizetti are being treated to the elaborate scholarly editions once accorded only the German masters; Bellini is taught, and considered seriously and lovingly, by the passers-on of the canonical repertory. Such things would have seemed fanciful, bizarre, in the nineteen-fifties. A *Journal of Donizetti Studies*? Dissertations on "I Puritani"? When Callas was reviving the operas of Donizetti and Bellini, you couldn't even find a biography of either composer in English, or a non-condescending one of Rossini in any language. Now you can walk into Patelson's, in New York, and buy paperback editions of some seventy operas by these three composers.

No leading figure brings about change single-handedly, of course; but it is not clear that these things would have happened without Callas. The ebbing of Europe's compositional tradition dictated a revivalist impulse, but what was being revived elsewhere was lute song, Renaissance motet, the concertos of Vivaldi and Telemann, the cantatas of Bach—all music much older than Callas's repertory. It would have been more logical for Italy to embark on a rehabilitation of the operas of Monteverdi or Alessandro Scarlatti.

The reason Callas went in other directions is that she was not a scholar or a revivalist but a late, improbable link to tradition. "Tradition" has a bad name among Old Guard thinkers in opera: they are reflexively averse to it as the historic opponent of "reform." But Callas's ability to reintroduce the music of the *primo ottocento* had much of its basis in her exposure to a few musicians who had absorbed it on its way out. By a lucky accident of fate, the teen-age Callas found herself in Athens in the hands of Elvira de Hidalgo, one of those light sopranos who had been holding the bel-canto techniques in escrow. De Hidalgo made her Naples début in 1908 and sang almost all the *primo ottocento* operas that were then in circulation. She was a strong shaper of students and a taskmaster of technique. (She also trained the *second* coloratura soprano of the postwar period, Leyla Gencer, who became a cult favorite in her own right.) Then, in Italy, Callas's first conductor was Tullio Serafin, who was nearly seventy. He secured many of her earliest engagements, persuaded her to put her training to work in those neglected operas, and eventually conducted fourteen of her recordings. As a young musician, Serafin had come along in time to hear operas like "Lucrezia Borgia," "Semiramide," and "William Tell" in the eighteen-nineties, just before they faded from the stage, and he carried within him a sense of what the serious century-old operas might be. A Callas born even ten years later would have been much less likely to find such teachers.

What's extraordinary is that the pupil was an American, who grew up in Washington Heights—who was not born to this tradition but learned it by immersion and application. Callas offers us the best proof yet that opera can rekindle itself in the talent of extraordinary individuals, even as the culture and artists that created it recede into the past. The best part of her influence still helps to carry it into the future. The worst part sometimes threatens to wreck it.



"How do you work one of these?"

Four tumultuous episodes preceded Callas's abrupt reduction of activity in 1959. The first occurred in the summer of 1957, when the Scala company took its celebrated "Sonnambula" production to that year's Edinburgh Festival. Callas sang four performances, and received great acclaim but also comments to the effect that her voice was under noticeable strain. An extra performance was added—without her consent, she maintained—and she refused to appear in it. It was announced that Callas was ill, but she was spied up and about and far from Edinburgh on the day concerned, so the matter erupted in the press, and La Scala's management and its prima donna were furious with each other. In the meantime, pleading exhaustion, Callas had begged out of her contracted début season with the San Francisco Opera in the fall of 1957. She unwisely offered to fulfill a reduced schedule, which allowed the company to claim that she was able to sing, and to charge her with breach of contract. In January of 1958, she was to revisit Rome as Norma, which she had sung triumphantly there in 1950 and 1953, but after Act I of the first performance she declared herself indisposed and withdrew. The theatre had no understudy on hand, and the gala audience, including the President of the Republic, had to be sent home amid cries of outrage. Her reëmergence in Italy was in April of 1958, at La Scala, in a gladiatorial atmosphere of post-Rome publicity and management hostility dating from the Edinburgh episode; after only nine performances, she and her home theatre severed relations. Then, in November, just before going onstage as Medea with the fledgling Dallas Civic Opera, she was dramatically dismissed from the Metropolitan by Rudolf Bing, for her failure to confirm performance schedules for a season that had already begun.

Around the same time, Callas managed to withdraw more quietly from productions in Vienna and London. In the space of some fifteen months, she had gained a reputation for vituperation and unreliability, and had broken with almost all her main houses. This was new behavior; she was already well known within the theatre for temperament, but it had been displayed mostly in the form of holding others to her own strict standards of professionalism. In her two seasons at the Metropolitan, she had called in sick only once; at La Scala in seven seasons only twice.

Callas's first European appearance after the Bing scandal was a gala concert for her Paris début, on December 19th. Onassis was in the audience. She sang arias from "Norma," "Il Trovatore," and "The Barber of Seville," plus Act II of "Tosca," staged in full, with Tito Gobbi as the police chief, Scarpia. This is the first Callas performance we can see today on video ("Maria Callas: Débuts à Paris," Angel/EMI 91258). It's maddening that we have this—an ill-rehearsed hodgepodge with a very shaky conductor, Georges Sébastian—and not a single real opera performance from Callas's home theatre. But even under such conditions we can see enough to imagine what she must have been like on the Scala stage. The restrained strength of gait and bearing, the deep expressiveness on the mobile, outsized features live up to every description. Callas visibly creates that same uncanny sense of intimacy, of private emotion overheard, that one has always found in her voice alone. She casts down her eyes, stands still, cradles her slender torso in both arms, and out of this quiet the bold strokes of the Bellini and the Verdi emerge with terrific force. "Una voce poco fà" (Rosina's teasing aria from "The Barber of Seville") is celestial, the florid tracery punctuated and articulated by diamond consonants. It is amazing how far she can go in the direction of coquetry without seeming coy. The audience was in transports.

The problem that eventually cannot be ignored, though, is the state of Callas's voice. The high phrases near the end of the "Trovatore" aria are just painful: harsh, overloud, and out of tune. If most of "Una voce" is from heaven, the sustained high B at the end, vibrating fiercely in both directions around the intended pitch, is from elsewhere. Callas does her best to keep the mood with gesture and facial expression, but the indulgence of the listener is steeply tested. These are the most obvious moments, but many others here—and on recordings from the preceding seasons—give us the real background to Callas's new professional problems: something is terribly wrong with her voice.

There has arisen what can only be called a conspiracy of minimization—eventually, of denial—around Callas's vocal problems. Writers and fans who had grown accustomed to rebutting her detractors continued to do so, sometimes with even greater intensity as their position became less tenable. Callas's became

"Yes, they're tasty, but you never know where they've been."

• •

the voice whose beauty only the wise could (still) hear. And the written record attests to the success of the minimizers: they have made it possible to associate the trailing off and eventual breakdown of Callas's career with the affair that blossomed the summer after the Paris gala.

The liaison began during a cruise on Onassis's yacht in the summer of 1959, which was notable for the presence of Winston Churchill, and which is described in excruciating detail from the cuckolded husband's point of view in Meneghini's 1981 memoir. By September, Callas and Meneghini were in separation proceedings. Her romance with Onassis was instant gossip-column fodder; her life became a round of parties, cruises, and wretched ups and downs with her charismatic but peremptory and ignorant lover; her stage career very nearly ceased.

Arianna Stassinopoulos asserts, in her biography of Callas as the victim of manipulative men, that "1960 began with the first major crisis of her voice" and attributes this to "the effect of her emotional state" on her singing. John Ardoin, in the 1974 coffee-table volume that remains the best Callas book, says that "from 1960 to 1965, the year she began an eight-year break in her career, a gradual disintegration took place in the remarkable artistic machinery she had so carefully built and so scrupulously maintained over twenty-five years." Her own preferred conductor in those years, Nicola Rescigno, takes it further and tailors it to the eventual myth:

> When Maria was living the life of a vestal virgin, so to speak, it was home-theatre-home. A dinner out was a big treat and an exception. When she broke that discipline, it was not the voice, I think, which suffered. It was the whole mechanism, for her voice had become a highly oiled machine which produced inhuman feats. . . . When there was an interruption, when these gears were slowed, a change took place. This began to be evident about the time of her separation from her husband in 1959. I don't think Maria herself realized exactly what went into her singing. . . . When this naturalness was no longer there, it shocked her, and she couldn't fully understand it or cope with it.

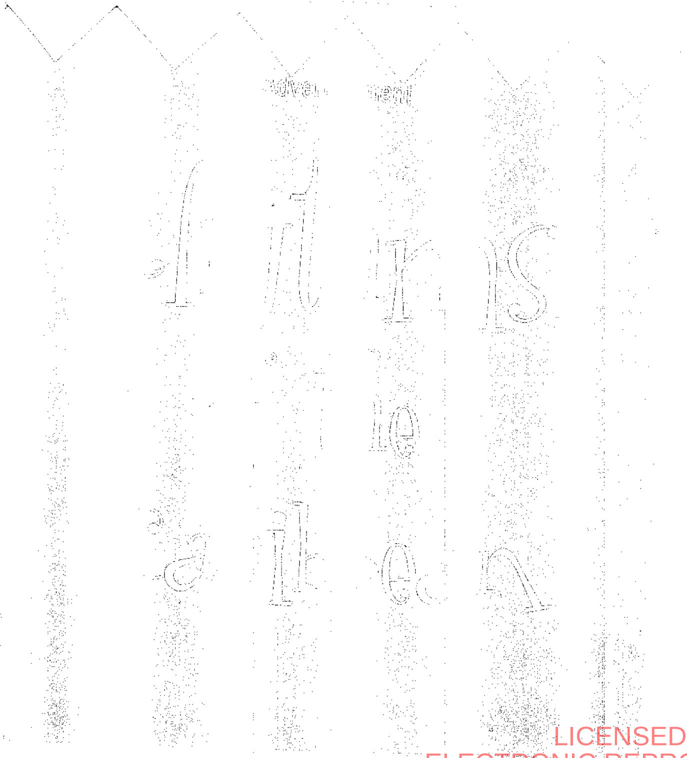
Other colleagues offered nonsense that borders on the mischievous. "I don't think anything happened to her voice—I think she only lost confidence," said Tito Gobbi, who had probably never listened to her except in the heat of performance. Zeffirelli asked, "Who cares if she is no longer thirty and can't hit an E-flat?" and he publicly offered to prove that Callas could still sing by staging "Carmen" for her.

This was fantasy, but the more limited claim that her decline dates from the Onassis episode is not correct, either. Nor is the hypothesis, often advanced, that her rapid weight loss was the origin of her difficulty. If the "Trovatore" high notes in 1958 in Paris are painful, they are already uncomfortable in 1956 on the EMI recording of that opera, and none too easy in 1953 at La Scala, and not really right even in 1950 in Mexico City. When you come right down to it, the high B in that magnificent entry in "Nabucco" in 1949 is under strain—the vibrato a little too wide and too slow. Then try the same note at the end of "Ebben, ne andrò lontana" on an anthology recorded in 1954: the climax is already a kind of shout, held in place by sheer will. By 1956, almost all her loud B's and C's are quite bad. And all the while the "harsh" aspects of the voice have been growing. So have Callas's tact and resourcefulness at artfully disguising them, but there are limits.

Callas's problems were inherent in her vocal method. This is her tragic flaw, one much more profound than a thirst for glamour, or bad judgment in men: in the core of her artistic self—in the intensity of her will to make the music she loved sound the way she imagined it—lay the defect that had to ruin her. It was a voice divided against itself—unimpeachable discipline in all the finer manifestations of singing but, in some basic aspects of tone production, improvisation on a base of plywood and Scotch Tape. And this vocal paradox had to be related to her personality: a voice manifests its human host in complex fashion. Callas was driven, insatiable, omnivorous, grand, possessed. She wanted the roles in which she could dominate, astonish, bewitch; her voice would do almost anything, and what few things it would not do she forced it to approximate.

The biggest flaw from the beginning was her inability to keep her voice free and unconstricted as it rose in pitch, and her willingness to compensate by main force. Just why she had this difficulty, and whether it could have been remedied at the outset, is unknowable today, but what is certain is that it couldn't have worn well over time. Callas also had the bad habit, widespread in Italy in her day, of carrying the chest voice too high, like a Broadway belter. That, too, involves strain; and her slimming could well have accelerated the process by sapping her strength. But the strain, the roughening, was already there.

At least three writers on Callas have observed some of this clearly: her own record producer, Walter Legge, in a much resented tribute/critique published in *Opera News* shortly after the singer's death; J. B. Steane, the chief singing critic of *Gramophone;* and Michael Scott, in a little-read 1991 study, whose title pointedly includes her husband's name, as the singer herself did while the management



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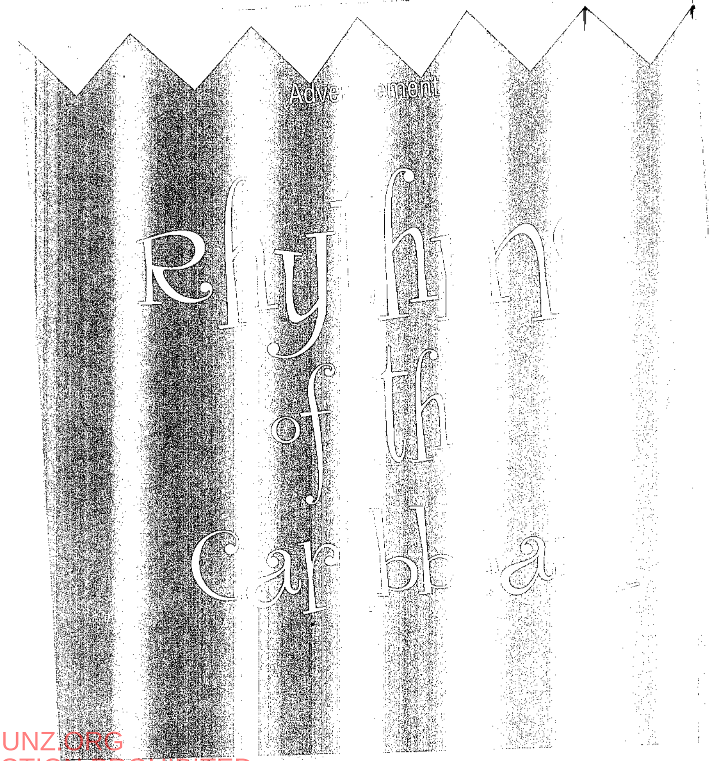
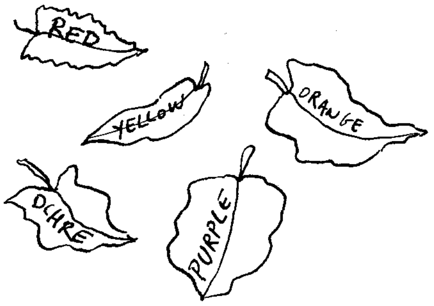

Advertisement
Rhythms
of the
Caribbean

of her career was their joint project—"Maria Meneghini Callas." But it's all too easy for these voices to be drowned out in the roar of legend or for the questions to be filed away in the public mind as unresolvable. This matters, because getting the chronology wrong helps us to get the biography wrong, and posterity learns the wrong lessons. Singers, like dancers and athletes, expect physical deterioration to end their careers, but what the singers expect is a gradual diminution of strength and range, not an encroachment of scorching ugliness, and they expect it in their fifties or later, not in their early thirties. The deterioration of Callas's voice was already advanced, and almost certainly irreversible, at the height of her glory at La Scala, long before she met Aristotle Onassis or tasted jet-set society.

And did she not know it? She had to—and better than anyone else. As early as 1958, she began to say in interviews that she would soon retire, vaguely suggesting that she had accomplished all she had set out to do. The roles that require sustained, highish singing in the most exposed way she either dropped (Turandot, Aida, Gioconda, and both of Verdi's Leonoras) or sang with equivocal success (a brief shot at Amelia in "Un Ballo in Maschera") or got through on temperament (Tosca). Even her beloved Norma became too perilous for frequent exposure. Instead, her repertory moved in the direction of fragility—to operas like "Sonnambula" and "Lucia," where she could rely on nuance and lightness, and save the fullest notes for isolated climaxes. And these roles, too, she lightened year by year. Much later, she told a Juilliard student that very little of "La Traviata" should be sung out in full voice: "You learn to underplay such things, and the drama then increases." It actually worked for a precarious while. Callas's response is moving, almost heroic, in that even as subtlety becomes more difficult for her she discovers ever greater resources for it. This is why the haunting detail work of "Bolena" and "Pirata," along with certain late broadcasts of "Traviata," "Lucia," and "Sonnambula," is easy to hear as the artistic peak of her work, even though the vocal difficulties have already encroached on the security of "Macbeth" and "Nabucco."

Callas was racing the clock. Imagine being the dominant figure in your profession, and knowing secretly that your professional wherewithal is slipping away from you month by month. Can anyone wonder that she began to lose confidence, to cancel performances and withdraw from projects, to let her volatile nature lapse into irresponsibility? Can anyone be surprised that when the alternative world of society and celebrity beckoned—a world that celebrated her without reference to the standards by which she had risen and might fall, that included a magnetic and powerful lover who knew nothing about the operatic life that Meneghini knew so well—Callas fled to it in miserable gratitude and relief?

When we watch Callas on film, it's important to remember that all the footage we have comes from the years of this flight. There is a moment in a 1959 Hamburg concert when we can almost see it happening: Her second selection is her opening scene in "Macbeth." It begins superbly, but when the line rises to a high C that had rung out steely-sure at La Scala, her voice cracks, and for an instant she breaks character with an oddly coquettish, apologetic smile. Blink and you would miss it, but if you don't blink it takes several moments before Lady Macbeth is back in focus. Yet there is pure treasure in some numbers. By the time Callas gets to the many-layered soliloquy of Elisabetta, in "Don Carlo," she is gloriously lost, immersed in the spirit of the drama. In the final scene from "Il Pirata," the long prelude shows how she could compose herself into a riveting stillness and how with a single gesture that speaks as loud as an orchestral tutti she could break it. This is not the busy, quasi-naturalistic acting that has been encouraged, too often in Callas's name, in recent decades; it looks like an instinctive re-creation of the kind of acting that was celebrated in the great operatic artists of the last century, an acting of dignity, spareness, emotional truth channelled through stylized conventions. She is doing what she said Serafin advised her to do: acting "according to the music—to a pause, to a chord, to a crescendo." Flaws and all, these two arias are fair mementos of the greatness that had so recently been in full flower. By the time Callas came back to Hamburg, in 1962, the high notes were ghastly beyond belief, and her persona, save for a few lucky stretches, is one of gritty determination against the odds.



Callas's negative influence in this regard has been as profound as her positive: her example has led from the acceptance of strained sounds "for the sake of drama"—already a questionable formulation—to a sense, among some listeners, and even among some singers, that the strained or ugly sounds are in themselves dramatic. Callas herself lent support to the idea as she began to adopt her supporters' arguments in interviews: "You cannot sing 'I hate you' in beautiful tones." Stop right there! In the end, this is a way of saying that representational art cannot exist, that the painter is being false to the chaos of real life if he controls his brush. The fact is that you absolutely can sing "I hate you" in beautiful tones if they are tones charged with that meaning, if they are tones that carry the expressive burden of hatred. Context is everything. In rock one sings "I love you" in ugly tones—that is, ugly to an operagoer. In opera one sings "I hate you" in beautiful tones—though not necessarily beautiful to a rock fan. But how many younger singers realize that, before Callas, there was no known example of a major artist developing a "wobble" on the high notes? Many seem to think that it's natural to get one sooner or later and Callas just got it sooner. One reason some younger listeners don't quite understand it when people find fault with Callas is that they've heard so much bad sound since.

Occasionally, Callas could still show why so many were willing to hold standards in abeyance for her. In a 1962 televised concert at Covent Garden, she tries out Carmen's Habanera, and it is superb: the diction in French is as startlingly immediate as it has always been in Italian, and the interpretation is bold and extroverted, but saved from vulgarity by her innate elegance and sense of proportion. Pleasure is clouded only by the reflection that she is achieving this in music that is very easy to sing, whereas she used to do it on the pinnacles of virtuosity. But she *looks* radiant. Surely, she must have imagined in those months, she could build a new life this way: occasional gala appearances with carefully chosen music to keep her name alive; otherwise, life with Onassis, rest, surcease from the agony and disappointment that a full operatic season had so rapidly become.

If that was her hope, it was denied her. Each time she brought her voice back after resting, there was a little less of it to be found. And the dreaded wobble refused to confine itself to those topmost notes; it inched down the scale, like a cancer invading the body. Even with the best will and the most supportive colleagues in the world, she could not be true to herself as a singer of artful dodges disguising incapacity. The brusque Callas of 1952 would have had no sympathy for the compromised and struggling figure of a decade later. She can't sing, so why doesn't she just quit? An anguished Callas made one more try.

In 1964-65, following a crisis in her relationship with Onassis (he had invited Jacqueline Kennedy on a cruise, and began spending time with her), Callas briefly attempted a comeback, singing thirty performances of "Tosca" and "Norma" to audiences in Paris, London, and New York, who were almost hysterically anxious for her reappearance. In a London telecast from 1964, again of Act II of "Tosca," in Zeffirelli's well-rehearsed production, Callas's voice is in obviously desperate condition, but the full orchestration helps: very little is exposed. The acting is beautiful and cinematically precise. The high point comes with the conventionally lyrical aria "Vissi d'arte": even in her reduced state, Callas can pour feeling into a melody, can bind the notes, including ugly ones, into a beautiful line. When, at the climax, she impulsively steps forward, her hands extended, her beautiful face full of feeling, something at the core of her way of making music drama is still alive.

But she could not continue like this. She returned to London, where it was announced that she would sing four more "Tosca"s, but she managed only one, a royal gala before the Queen. Press coverage was extraordinarily hostile, with gossip columnists delighted at finding her on somebody's yacht or at somebody's party when she should have been singing. Sympathetic music critics overcompensated, writing up not what they must have heard (many of these late performances were taped, so we can second-guess them) but what their desire to defend a great artist persuaded them to hear. After that isolated "Tosca" began a long silence.

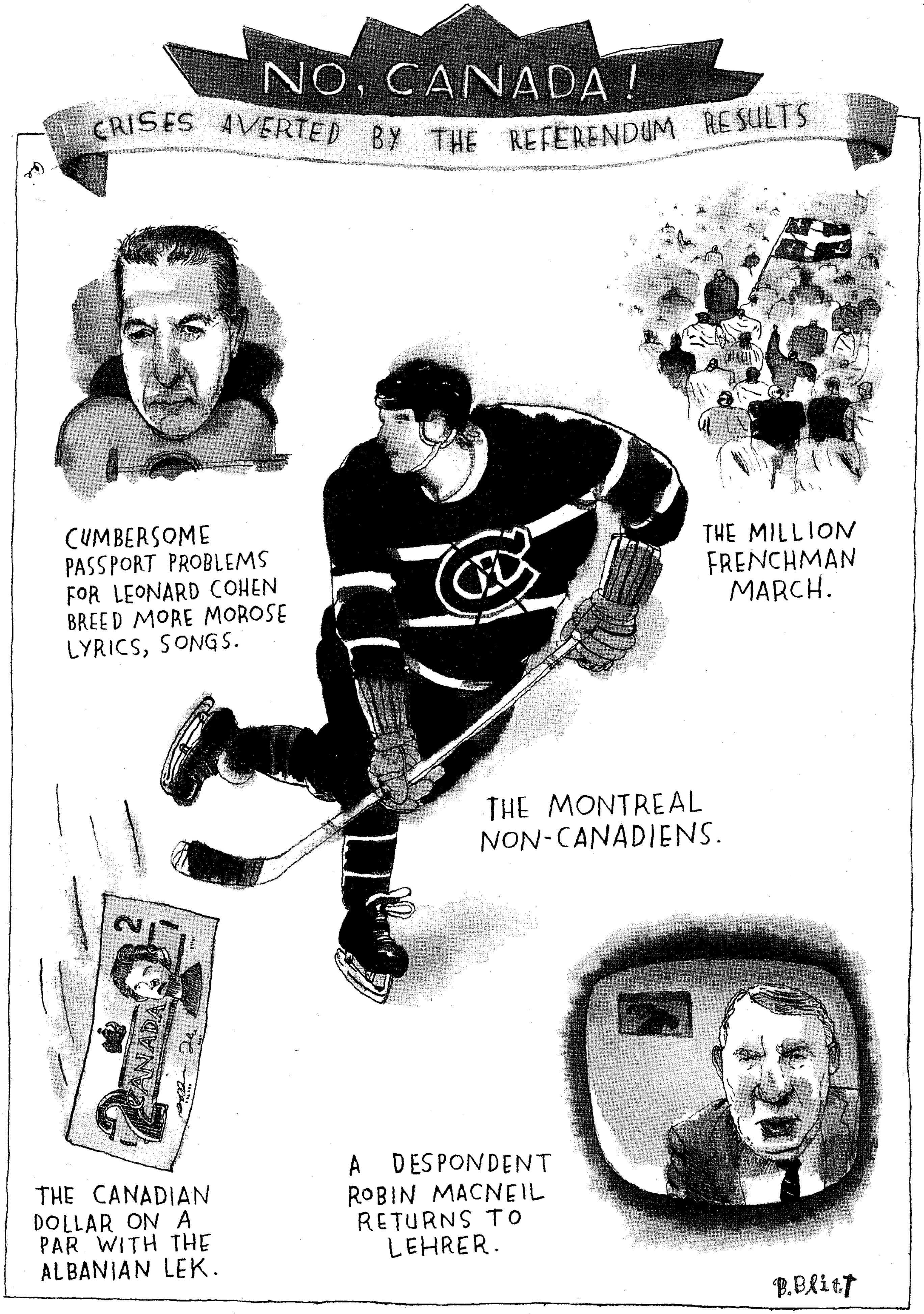
FROM time to time, Callas appeared on television for sad celebrity interviews, all painted glamour, cultivated laughter, and affected accent. (Speaking to the BBC, she actually stops herself in the middle of pronouncing "conservatory" and says "*conservatoire*"; a little later, New York peeks through as she tells of getting a contract with the Athens Opera on the condition "that I would not sing anywheres else.") Her relationship with Onassis continued, but fitfully. In 1966, she told friends that she aborted a pregnancy, and there was another explosive quarrel in the summer of 1968. That fall, he married Jacqueline Kennedy. Callas made sporadic plans to resume her career. Various projects were announced, but Callas, clearly terrified and ambivalent, ultimately quashed each of them. She made one non-singing film, "Medea," with Pier Paolo Pasolini; her plasticity of motion and facial expression makes it lovely to watch, but it has little to do with her genius of acting "according . . . to a chord, to a crescendo." She dabbled in stage directing (in Turin, without success) and in teaching, in some Juilliard master classes that are treated in Terrence McNally's new play, "Master Class." By far the majority of her comments to the students came from the discipline of her early training: she was simply an old pro helping young pros. This was probably the nearest she came to her true self in those years—but all she really wanted was to sing again.

The unpleasant secret is that damaged voices don't mend. There is no example of an important operatic singer encountering serious vocal problems and returning to form. The best that can be hoped for is that the decline can be arrested at a point where the singer, through a combination of canny management and a discreet lowering of aim, can go on working productively. Quite a few well-known singers have suffered markedly and have developed coping tactics that allowed them to continue through a career of normal duration. But not one of them was able to bring back the lost freshness or finesse, and Callas would not have been able to do so, either. Everyone around her was full of advice, mostly having to do with abandoning her high-soprano repertory. Zeffirelli said she should try Monteverdi and "Carmen"; Bing offered a Poulenc monodrama at the Met; Gerald Moore lamented the art-song repertory she never explored; Neville Cardus, of the *Guardian* (displaying the critic's too typical ignorance of voice), suggested in an open letter that she switch to German roles; she was even invited (and *Newsweek* reported that she had agreed) to record pop standards.

Callas knew better than her admirers, and still not quite well enough. Recording seemed slightly less threatening than stage appearances, and in 1969 she picked her way laboriously through several Verdi arias at EMI sessions. These were left half finished, but the patched-together tapes (issued in EMI's exhaustive cullings of unpublished Callas material) show what a reduced Callas might have been like. Better to hear the sad documents of the early sixties, where the voice sounds awful but she is still singing like Callas, still operating on her stage instincts and on the remnants of her old bravery.

That it could become even worse was demonstrated in the early seventies, in some truly gruesome recordings with Giuseppe Di Stefano for Philips (still mercifully unpublished, but stay tuned) and in their worldwide concert tour. This was a failure so decisive that no one really expected another attempt. None was made, though Callas went on practicing and hoping. Tapes have circulated in pirate form, and bits are now officially available on the documentary videos: they prove depressingly and conclusively that no Callas comeback would have been possible. The idea that Callas lost her nerve rather than her voice does a profound disservice to her art—reduces it to an art of mere theatrics.

Even that art abandoned her in the concerts with Di Stefano, which document one moment of artistic desperation after another. "Anything to survive, my dear. At my stage of the game," she told an interviewer. But survival was impossible, and she must have known it. Several of her intimates suspect that Callas committed suicide. A heart attack was announced as the cause of death, but stories of drug overdoses abounded, and the body was cremated with unusual haste, without an autopsy—on whose orders is still not clear. Her husband, whom she had not seen for eighteen years, said that he found in her prayerbook, written in her handwriting, the lines that Ponchielli's Gioconda sings when she resolves to take her own life. Callas had lived for her art, and it was long dead. Her tragedy is as simple as it seems, and as simple as the worshippers and the psychobiographers don't want it to be: she lost her voice, the most wonderfully musical voice we have ever heard. ♦



NO, CANADA!

CRISES AVERTED BY THE REFERENDUM RESULTS

CUMBERSOME PASSPORT PROBLEMS FOR LEONARD COHEN BREED MORE MOROSE LYRICS, SONGS.

THE MILLION FRENCHMAN MARCH.

THE MONTREAL NON-CANADIENS.

THE CANADIAN DOLLAR ON A PAR WITH THE ALBANIAN LEK.

A DESPONDENT ROBIN MACNEIL RETURNS TO LEHRER.

B.Blitt

FICTION

EVERMORE

BY JULIAN BARNES

ALL the time she carried them with her, in a bag knotted at the neck. She had bayonetted the thin plastic with a fork, so that condensation would not gather and begin to rot the frail postcards. She knew what happened when you covered seedlings in a flowerpot: damp came from nowhere to make its sudden climate. This had to be avoided. There had been so much wet back then, so much rain, churned mud, and drowned horses.

There were three cards, the last he had sent. Earlier ones had been divided up, lost perhaps, but she had the last three, his final evidence. Each year, on the day itself, she would unknot the bag and study the jerky pencilled address, the formal signature (initials and surname only), the obedient crossings-out. For many years she had ached at what the cards did not say; but nowadays she found something in their official impassivity which seemed proper, even if not consoling.

Of course she did not need actually to look at them, any more than she needed the photograph to recall his dark eyes, sticky-out ears, and the jaunty smile that said that the fun would be all over by Christmas. At any moment she could bring the three pieces of buff field-service card exactly to mind. The dates: Dec. 24, Jan. 11, Jan. 17, written in his hand, and confirmed by the postmark which added the years: 1916, 1917, 1917. And: "NOTHING is to be written on this side except the date and signature of the sender. Sentences not required may be erased. *If anything else is added the postcard will be destroyed.*" And then the brutal choices:

I am quite well
I have been admitted into hospital
  sick
  wounded
    and am going on well
    and hope to be discharged soon
I am being sent down to the base
I have received your
  letter dated
  telegram
  parcel
Letter follows at first opportunity
I have received no letter from you
  lately
  for a long time

On each occasion he was quite well. He had never been admitted into hospital. He was not being sent down to the base. He had received a letter of a certain date. A letter would follow at the first opportunity. He had not received no letter. All done with thick, pencilled crossing-out and a single date. Then, beside the instruction "Signature only," the last signal from her brother: "S. Moss." A large, looping "S" with a circling dot after it. Then "Moss" written without lifting from the card what she always imagined as a stub of pencil end studiously licked.

On the other side, their mother's name—Mrs. Moss, with a grand "M" and a short stabbing line beneath the "rs"—then the address. Another warning down the edge, this time in smaller letters. "The address only to be written on this side. If anything else is added, the postcard will be destroyed." But across the top of her second card Sammy had written something, and it had not been destroyed. A neat line of ink without the rough loopiness of his pencilled signature: "*50 yds* from Germans. Posted from Trench." In fifty years, one for each underlined yard, she had not come up with the answer. Why had he written it, why in ink, why had they allowed it? Sam was a cautious and responsible boy, especially toward their mother, and he would not have risked a cancelled card. But he had undeniably written these words. And in ink, too. Was it code for something else? A premonition of death? Except that Sam was not the sort to have premonitions. Perhaps it was simple excitement, a desire to impress. Look how close we are. *50 yds* from Germans. Posted from Trench.

She was glad he was at Cabaret Rouge, with his own headstone. Found and identified. Given known and honored burial. She had a horror of Thiepval which did not diminish in spite of her dutiful yearly visits. Thiepval, where the dead had no stones and were diminished to their mere chiselled names. Thiepval's lost souls. You had to make the right preparation for them, for their lostness. So she always began her visit elsewhere, at Caterpillar Valley, Thistle Dump, Quarry, Blighty Valley, Ulster Tower, Herbécourt.

No Morning Dawns
No Night Returns
But What We Think Of Thee.

That was at Herbécourt, a walled enclosure in the middle of fields, room for a few score graves, most of them Australian, but this was a British lad, the one who owned this inscription. Was it a vice to have become such a connoisseur of grief? Yet it was true, she had her favorite cemeteries. Like Blighty Valley and Thistle Dump, both half hidden from the road in a fold of valley; or Quarry, a graveyard looking as if its village had left it behind; or Devonshire, that tiny, private patch for the Devonshire troops who died on the first day of the Somme, who had fought to hold their trench and held it still. You followed signposts in British racing green, then walked across fields guarded by wooden martyred Christs to these sanctuaries of orderliness, where everything was accounted for. Headstones were lined up like dominoes on edge; beneath them, their owners were present and correct, listed, tended. Creamy altars proclaimed that "THEIR NAME LIVETH FOR EVERMORE." And so it did, on the graves, in the books, in hearts, in memories.

EACH year, she wondered if this would be her last visit. Her life no longer offered up to her the confident plausibility of two decades more, one decade, five years. Instead, it was now renewed on an annual basis, like her driving license. Every April, Dr. Holling had to certify her fit for another twelve

FILIP PAGOWSKI

months behind the wheel. Perhaps she and the Morris would go kaput on the same day.

Before, it had been the boat train, the express to Amiens, a local, a bus or two. Since she had acquired the Morris, she had in theory become freer; and yet her routine remained almost immutable. She would drive to Dover and take a night ferry, riding the Channel alongside burly lorry drivers. It saved money, and meant she was always in France for daybreak. *No Morning Dawns* . . . Sam must have seen each daybreak and wondered if that was the date they would put on his stone. . . .

From Arras, the northern tip of that thinned triangle whose southern points were Albert and Péronne, she would begin her solemn and necessary tour of the woods and fields in which, so many decades before, the British Army had counterattacked to relieve the pressure on the French at Verdun. That had been the start of it, anyway. No doubt scholars were by now having second thoughts, but that was what scholars were for; she herself no longer had arguments to deploy about the war, positions to hold. She valued only what she had experienced at the time: an outline of strategy, the conviction of gallantry, and the facts of mourning.

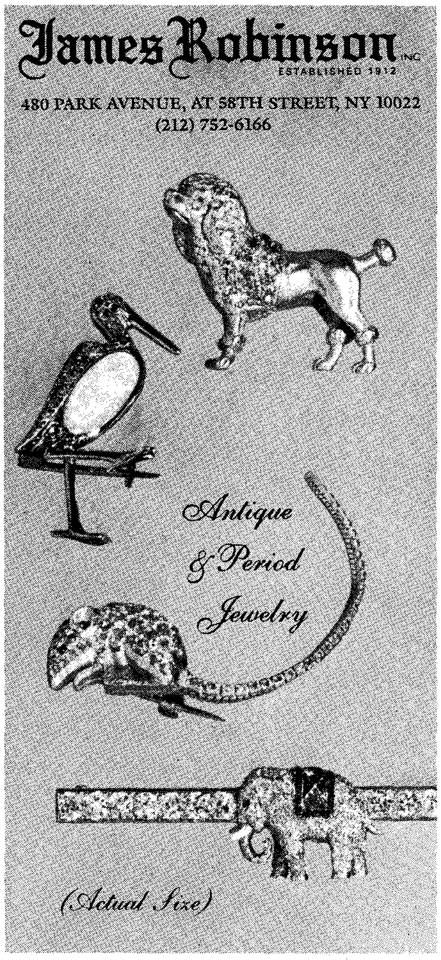
At first, back then, the commonality of grief had helped: wives, mothers, sisters, comrades, an array of brass hats, and a bugler amid gassy morning mist that the feeble November sun had failed to burn away. Later, remembering Sam had changed: it became work, continuity; instead of anguish and glory, there was fierce unreasonableness, about both his death and her commemoration of it. During that period, she was hungry for the solitude and the voluptuous selfishness of grief: her Sam, her loss, her mourning, and nobody else's similar. She admitted as much: there was no shame to it. But now, after half a century, her feelings had simply become part of her. Her grief was a caliper, necessary and supporting; she could not imagine walking without it.

WHEN she had finished with Herbécourt and Devonshire, Thistle Dump and Caterpillar Valley, she would come, always with trepidation, to the great redbrick memorial at Thiepval. An arch of triumph, yes, but of what kind, she wondered: the triumph over death or the triumph *of* death? "Here are recorded names of officers and men of the British armies who fell on the Somme battlefields July 1915–February 1918 but to whom the fortune of war denied the known and honoured burial given to their comrades in death." Thiepval Ridge, Pozières Wood, Albert, Morval, Ginchy, Guillemont, Ancre, Ancre Heights, High Wood, Delville Wood, Bapaume, Bazentin Ridge, Miraumont, Transloy Ridges, Flers, Courcelette. Each battle accorded its stone wreath, each regiment its section of wall: name after name after name, the Missing of the Somme, the official graffiti of death. This monument by Sir Edwin Lutyens revolted her, it always had. She could not bear the thought of these lost men, exploded into unrecognizable pieces, engulfed in the mud fields, one moment fully there with pack and gaiters, baccy and rations, with their memories and their hopes, their past and their future crammed into them, and the next moment only a shred of khaki or a sliver of shinbone to prove they had ever existed. Or worse: some of these names had first been given known and honored burial, their allotment of ground with their name above it, only for some new battle with its heedless artillery to tear up the temporary graveyard and bring a second, final extermination. Yet each of those scraps of uniform and flesh—whether newly killed or richly decomposed—had been brought back here and reorganized, conscripted into the eternal regiment of the Missing, kitted out and made to dress to the right. Something about the way they had vanished and the way they were now reclaimed was more than she could bear: as if an army that had thrown them away so lightly now chose to own them again so gravely. She was not sure whether this was the case. She claimed no understanding of military matters. All she claimed was an understanding of grief.

Her wariness of the Thiepval monument always made her read it skeptically, with her proofreader's eye. She noticed, for instance, that the French translation of the English inscription listed—as the English one did not—the exact number of the Missing: 73,367. That was another reason she did not care to be here, standing in the middle of the arch looking down over the puny Anglo-French cemetery (French crosses to the left, British stones to the right) while the wind drew tears from an averted eye. 73,367: beyond a certain point, the numbers became uncountable and diminished in effect. The more dead, the less proportionate the pain. 73,367: even she, with all her expertise in grief, could not imagine so many.

Perhaps the British realized that the number of the Missing might continue to grow through the years, that no fixed total could be true; perhaps it was not shame but a kind of sensible poetry that made them decline to specify a figure. And they were right: the numbers had indeed changed. The arch was inaugurated in 1932 by the Prince of Wales, and all the names of all the Missing had been carved upon its surfaces, but still, here and there, out of their proper place, hauled back tardily from oblivion, were a few soldiers listed only under the heading of "Addenda." She knew so many of their names by now: Dodds T., Northumberland Fusiliers; Malcolm H. W., The Cameronians; Lennox F. J., Royal Irish Rifles; Lovell F. H. B., Royal Warwickshire Regiment; Orr R., Royal Inniskillings; Forbes R., Cameron Highlanders; Roberts J., Middlesex Regiment; Moxham A., Wiltshire Regiment; Humphries F. J., Middlesex Regiment; Hughes H. W., Worcestershire Regiment; Bateman W. T., Northamptonshire Regiment; Tarling E., The Cameronians; Richards W., Royal Field Artillery; Rollins S., East Lancashire Regiment; Byrne L., Royal Irish Rifles; Gale E. O., East Yorkshire Regiment; Walters J., Royal Fusiliers; Argar D., Royal Field Artillery.

She felt closest to Rollins S., since he was an East Lancashire like Sammy; but it was Malcolm H. W. who used to intrigue her most. Malcolm H. W., or, to give him his full inscription, "Malcolm H. W. The Cameronians (Sco. Rif.) served as Wilson H." An addendum and a corrigendum all in one. It had pleased her to imagine his story. Was he underage? Did he falsify his name to escape home, to run away from some girl? Was he wanted for a crime, like those fellows who joined the French Foreign Legion? She did not really want an answer, but she liked to dream a little about this man who had lost first his identity and then his life. In later years she turned against such fancifulness.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There was no mystery really. Private H. W. Malcolm becomes H. Wilson. No doubt he was in truth H. Wilson Malcolm, and when he volunteered they wrote the wrong name in the wrong column; then they were unable to change it. That would make sense: man is only a clerical error corrected by death.

She had never cared for the main inscription over the central arch:

AUX ARMEES
FRANCAISE ET
BRITANNIQUE
L'EMPIRE
BRITANNIQUE
RECON-
-NAISSANT

Each line was centered, which was correct, but there was altogether too much white space beneath the inscription. She would have inserted "less #" on the galley proof. And each year she disliked more and more the line break in the word "*reconnaissant*." There were different schools of thought about this—she had argued with her superiors over the years—but she insisted that breaking a word in the middle of a doubled consonant was a nonsense. You broke a word where the word itself was perforated. Look what this military, architectural, or sculptural nincompoop had produced: a fracture that left a separate word, *naissant*, by mistake. *Naissant* had nothing to do with *reconnaissant*, nothing at all; worse, it introduced the notion of birth onto this monument to death. She had written to the War Graves Commission about it, many years ago, and had been told that the proper procedures had been followed. They told *her* that!

She also disliked "EVERMORE." Their name liveth for evermore: here at Thiepval, also at Cabaret Rouge, Caterpillar Valley, Combles Communal Cemetery Extension, and all the larger memorials. It was, of course, the correct form, or at least the more regular form; but something in her preferred to see it as two words. "EVER MORE": it seemed more weighty like this, with an equal bell toll on each half. In any case, she had a quarrel with her colleagues at the Dictionary about "evermore." "Always, at all times, constantly, continually"—that was Sense 2. Yes, it could mean this in the ubiquitous inscription. But she preferred Sense 1: "For all future time." Their name liveth for all future time. No morning dawns, no night returns, but what we think of thee. This is what the inscription meant. But the Dictionary had marked Sense 1 as "*Obs.* exc. *arch.*": "obsolete except archaic." No, oh certainly not, no. And not with a last quotation as recent as 1854. She would have spoken to Mr. Rothwell, the Dictionary's deputy editor, about this, or at least pencilled a looping note on the galley proof; but this entry was not among those being revised, and the letter "E" had passed over her desk without an opportunity to make the adjustment.

"EVERMORE." She wondered if there was such a thing as collective memory, something more than the sum of individual memories. If so, was it merely coterminous yet in some way richer; or did it last longer? She wondered if those too young to have original knowledge could be given memory, could have it grafted on. She thought of this especially at Thiepval. Though she hated the place, when she saw young families trailing across the grass toward the redbrick *arc de triomphe* it also roused in her a wary hopefulness. Christian cathedrals could inspire religious faith by their vast assertiveness; why, then, should not Lutyens's memorial provoke some response equally beyond the rational? That reluctant child, whining about the strange food its mother produced from plastic boxes, might receive memory here. Such an edifice assured the newest eye of the preëxistence of the profoundest emotions. Grief and awe lived here; they could be breathed, absorbed. And if so, then this child might in turn bring its child, and so on, from generation to generation, "EVERMORE." Not just to count the Missing, but to understand what those from whom they had gone missing knew, and to feel her loss afresh.

PERHAPS this was one reason she had married Denis. Of course, she should never have done so. And in a way she never had, for there had been no carnal connection: she unwilling, he incapable. The marriage had lasted two years, and his uncomprehending eyes when she delivered him back were impossible to forget. All she could say in defense was that it was the only time she had behaved with such pure selfishness: she had married him for her own reasons, and discarded him for her own reasons. Some might say that the rest of her life had been selfish, too, devoted as it was entirely to commemoration; but this was a selfishness that hurt nobody.

Poor Denis. He was still handsome when he came back, though his hair grew white on one side and he dribbled. When the fits came on, she knelt on his chest and held his tongue down with a stub of pencil. Every night, he roamed restlessly through his sleep, muttered and roared, fell silent for a while, and then with parade-ground precision would shout, "*Hip! Hip! Hip!*" When she woke him, he could never remember what had been happening. He had guilt and pain, but no specific memory of what he felt guilty about. She knew: Denis had been hit by shrapnel and taken back down the line to hospital without a farewell to his best pal, Jewy Moss, leaving Sammy to be killed during the next day's Hun bombardment. After two years of this marriage, two years of watching Denis vigorously brush his patch of white hair to make it go away, she had returned him to his sisters. From now on, she told them, they should look after Denis and she would look after Sam. The sisters had gazed at her in silent astonishment. Behind them, in the hall, Denis, his chin wet and his brown eyes uncomprehending, stood with an awkward patience that implied that this latest event was nothing special in itself, merely one of a number of things he failed to grasp, and that there would surely be much more to come, all down the rest of his life, which would also escape him.

SHE had taken the job on the Dictionary a month later. She worked alone in a damp basement, at a desk across which curled long sheets of galley proofs. Condensation beaded the window. She was armed with a brass table lamp and a pencil that she sharpened until it was too short to fit in the hand. Her script was large and loose, somewhat like Sammy's; she deleted and inserted, just as he had done on his field-service postcards. "*Nothing is to be written on this side of the galley proof. If anything else is added the galley proof will be destroyed.*" No, she did not have to worry; she made her marks with impunity. She spotted colons that were italic instead of roman, brackets that were square instead of round, inconsistent abbreviations, misleading cross-references. Occasionally she made suggestions. She

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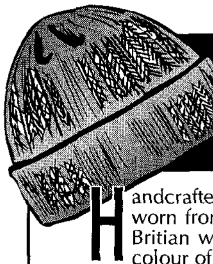

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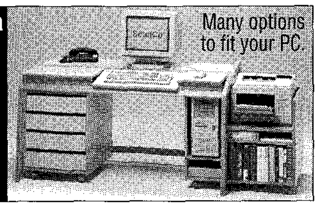

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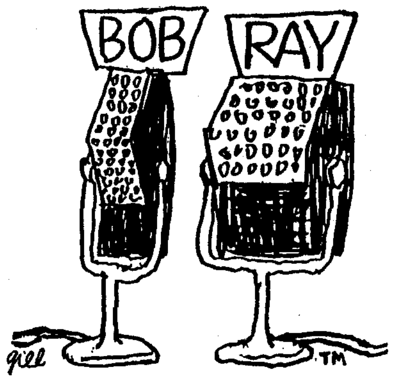

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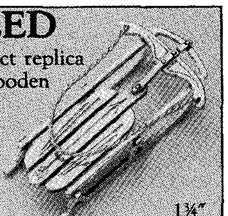

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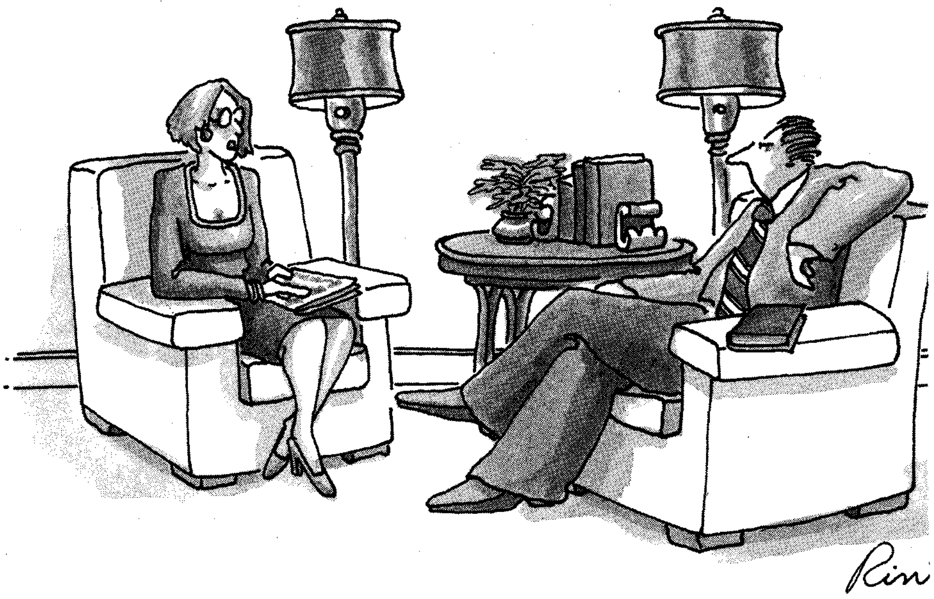


"You may well be from Mars, but the children and I are still from Westchester."

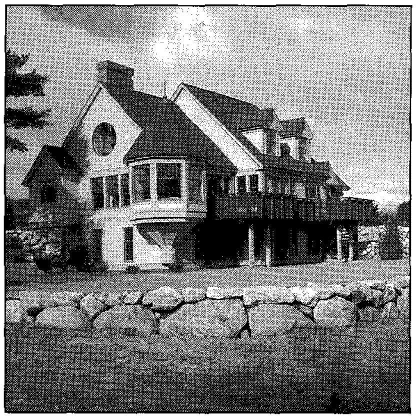
• •

might observe, in looping pencil, that such and such a word was in her opinion "*vulgar*" rather than "*colloquial*," or that the sense illustrated was "*figurative*" rather than "*transferred*." She passed on her galley proofs to Mr. Rothwell, but never inquired whether her annotations were finally acted upon. Mr. Rothwell, a bearded, taciturn, and pacific man, valued her meticulous eye, her sure grasp of the Dictionary's conventions, and her willingness to take work home if a fascicle was shortly going to press. He remarked to himself and to others that she had a strangely disputatious attitude over words labelled obsolete. Often she would propose "?*Obs.*" rather than "*Obs.*" as the correct marking. Perhaps this had something to do with age, Mr. Rothwell thought; younger folk were perhaps more willing to accept that a word had had its day.

In fact, Mr. Rothwell was only five years younger than she; but Miss Moss—as she had reverted to being after her disposal of Denis—had aged quickly, almost as a matter of will. The years passed and she grew stout, her hair flew a little more wildly away from her clips, and her spectacle lenses became thicker. Her stockings had a dense, antique look to them, and she never took her raincoat to the dry cleaner. Younger lexicographers entering her office, where a number of back files were stored, wondered if the faint smell of rabbit hutch came from the walls, the old Dictionary slips, Miss Moss's raincoat, or Miss Moss herself. None of this mattered to Mr. Rothwell, who saw only the precision of her work. Though entitled by the Press to an annual holiday of fifteen working days, she never took more than a single week.

At first this holiday coincided with the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month; Mr. Rothwell had the delicacy not to ask for details. In later years, however, she would take her week in other months, late spring or early autumn. When her parents died and she inherited a small amount of money, she surprised Mr. Rothwell by arriving for work one day in a small gray Morris with red-leather seats. It sported a yellow metal A.A. badge on the front and a G.B. plate on the back. At the age of fifty-three she had passed her driving test the first time, and maneuvered her car with a precision bordering on élan.

In France she always slept in the car. It saved money, but mainly it helped her be alone with herself and Sam. The villages in that narrow triangle south of Arras became accustomed to the sight of an aging British car the color of gunmetal drawn up beside the war memorial; inside, an elderly lady wrapped in a travelling rug would be asleep in the passenger seat. She never locked the car at night, for it seemed impertinent, disrespectful on her part to feel any fear.



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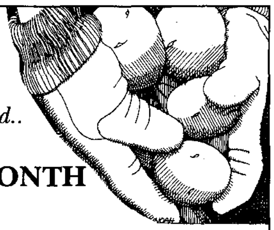

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She slept while the villages slept, and would wake as a drenched cow on its way to milking softly shouldered a wing of the parked Morris. Every so often she would be invited in by a villager, but she preferred not to accept hospitality. Her behavior was not regarded as peculiar, and cafés in the region knew to serve her *thé à l'anglaise* without her having to ask.

AFTER she had finished with Thiepval, with Thistle Dump and Caterpillar Valley, she would drive up through Arras and take the D-937 toward Béthune. Ahead lay Vimy, Cabaret Rouge, Notre-Dame-de-Lorette. But before them there was always one last visit to be paid: to Maison Blanche. Such peaceful names they mostly had. But here at Maison Blanche were forty-four thousand German dead, forty-four thousand Huns laid out beneath their thin black crosses, a sight as orderly as you would expect from the Huns, though not as splendid as the British graves. She lingered there, reading a few names at random, idly wondering, when she found a date just a little later than January 21, 1917, if this could be the Hun that had killed her Sammy. Was this the man who squeezed the trigger, fed the machine gun, blocked his ears as the howitzer roared? And see how short a time he had lasted afterward: two days, a week, a month or so in the mud before being lined up in known and honored burial, facing out once more toward her Sammy, though separated now not by barbed wire and "50 yds" but by a stretch of road.

She felt no rancor toward these Huns; time had washed from her any anger at the man, the regiment, the Hun army, the nation that had taken Sam's life. Her resentment was against those who had come later. She hated the second war for all it had done to the memory of the first. And she hated the way in which the first war was held responsible for the second, as if Sam, Denis, and all the East Lancashires who fell were partly the cause of that business. Sam had done what he could—he had served and died—and was punished all too quickly with becoming subordinate in memory. Time did not behave rationally. Fifty years back to the Somme; a hundred beyond that to Waterloo; four hundred more to Agincourt, or Azincourt, as the French preferred. Yet

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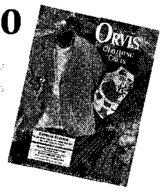

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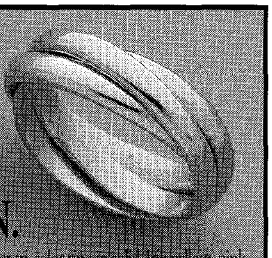

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these distances had now been squeezed closer to one another. She blamed it on 1939-45.

She knew to keep away from those parts of France where the second war happened, or at least where it was remembered. In the early years of the Morris, she had sometimes made the mistake of imagining herself on holiday, of being a tourist. You might thoughtlessly stop in a lay-by, or be taking a stroll down a back lane in some tranquil, heat-burdened part of the country, when a neat tablet inserted in a dry wall would assault you. It would commemorate Monsieur Un Tel, "*lâchement assassiné par les Allemands*," or "*tué*," or "*fusillé*," and then an insulting modern date: "1943," "1944," "1945." They blocked the view, these deaths and these dates; they demanded attention by their recency. She refused, she refused.

When she stumbled like this upon the second war, she would hurry to the nearest village for consolation. She always knew where to look: next to the church, the *mairie*, the railway station; at a fork in the road; on a dusty square with cruelly pollarded lime trees and a few rusting café tables. There she would find her damp-stained memorial, topped by its heroic *poilu*, grieving widow, triumphant Marianne, rowdy cockerel. Not that the story she read on the plinth needed any illustration. Rival lists of dead, whose imbalance conferred the terrible primacy of the Great War: 67 who had died then as against 9 in the second war, 83 against 12, 40 against 5, 27 against 2. Here was the eternal corroboration she sought, the historical corrigendum. She would touch the names cut into stone, their gilding washed away on the weather side. Her eye would check down the bigger list, snagging at a name repeated twice, thrice, four, five, six times: one entire male generation of a family taken away to known and honored burial. In the bossy statistics of death she would find the comfort she needed.

She would spend the last night at Aix-Noulette (101 vs. 7); at Souchez (48 vs. 6), where she remembered Plouvier, Maxime, *Sergent*, killed on December 17, 1916, the last of his village to die before her Sam; at Carency (19 vs. 1); at Ablain-Saint-Nazaire (66 vs. 9), eight of whose male Lherbiers had died, four on the *champ d'honneur*, three as *victimes civiles*, one a *civil fusillé par l'ennemi*. Then, the next morning, cocked with grief, she would set off for Cabaret Rouge while dew was still on the grass. There was comfort in solitude and damp knees. She no longer talked to Sam; everything had been said decades ago. The heart had been expressed, the apologies made, the secrets given. She no longer wept, either; that, too, had stopped. But the hours she spent with him at Cabaret Rouge were the most vital of her life. They always had been.

The D-937 did a reminding elbow at Cabaret Rouge, making sure you slowed out of respect, drawing your attention to Brigadier Sir Frank Higginson's handsome domed portico, which served as both entrance gate and memorial arch. From the portico, the burial ground dropped away at first, then sloped up again toward the cross on which hung not Christ but a metal sword. Symmetrical, amphitheatrical, Cabaret Rouge held 6,727 British soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen; 749 Canadians; 116 Australians; 43 South Africans; 15 Indians; 7 New Zealanders; 2 members of the Royal Guernsey Light Infantry; 1 member of an unknown unit; and 4 Germans.

It also contained or, more exactly, had at one point had scattered over it, the ashes of Brigadier Sir Frank Higginson, Secretary to the Imperial War Graves Commission, who died in 1958, at the age of sixty-eight. That showed true loyalty and remembrance. His widow, Lady Violet Lindsley Higginson, died four years later, and her ashes had been scattered here, too. Fortunate Lady Higginson. Why should the wife of a brigadier who, whatever he had done in the Great War, had not died, be allowed such enviable and meritorious burial, and yet the sister of one of those soldiers whom the fortune of war had led to known and honored burial be denied such solace? The Commission had twice denied her request, saying that a military cemetery did not receive civilian ashes. The third time she wrote they were less polite, referring her brusquely to their earlier correspondence.

There had been incidents down the years. They had stopped her coming for

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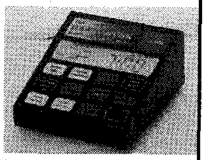

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the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month by refusing her permission to sleep the night beside his grave. They said they did not have camping facilities; they affected to sympathize, but what if everybody else wanted to do the same? She replied that it was quite plain that no one else wanted to do the same but that if they did then such a desire should be respected. After some years, however, she ceased to miss the official ceremony: it seemed to her full of people who remembered improperly, impurely.

There had been problems with the planting. The grass at the cemetery was French grass, and it seemed to her of the coarser type, inappropriate for British soldiers to lie beneath. Her campaign over this with the Commission led nowhere. So one spring she took along a small spade and a square yard of English turf kept damp in a plastic bag. After dark, she dug out the offending French grass and laid down the softer English turf, patting it into place, then stamping it in. She was pleased with her work, and the next year, as she approached the grave, could see no indication of the mending she had done. But when she knelt she realized that her work had been undone: the French grass was back again. The same had happened when she had surreptitiously planted her bulbs. Sam liked tulips, yellow ones especially, and one autumn she had pushed half a dozen bulbs into the earth. But the following spring, when she returned, there were only dusty red geraniums in front of his stone. There had also been the desecration. Not so very long ago. Arriving shortly after dawn, she found something on the grass which at first she put down to a dog. But when she saw the same in front of 1685 Private W. A. Andrade 4th Bn. London Regt. R. Fus. 15th March 1915, and in front of 675 Private Leon Emanuel Levy The Cameronians (Sco. Rif.) 16th August 1916 aged 21 / And the Soul Returneth to God Who Gave It—Mother, she judged it most unlikely that a dog, or three dogs, had managed to find the only three Jewish graves in the cemetery. She gave the caretaker the rough edge of her tongue. He admitted that such desecrations had occurred before, also that paint had been sprayed, but he always tried to arrive before anyone else and remove the signs. She told him that he might be honest but he was clearly

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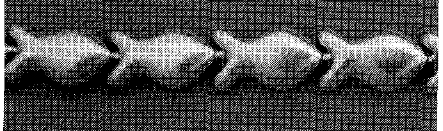

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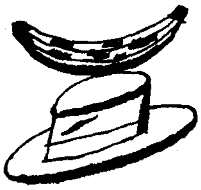
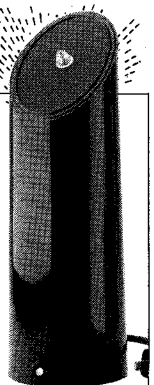
idle. She blamed the second war. She tried not to think about it again.

For her, now, the view back to 1917 was uncluttered: the decades were mown grass, and at their end was a row of white headstones, domino-thin. 1358 Private Samuel M. Moss East Lancashire Regt. 21st January 1917, and in the middle the Star of David. Some graves in Cabaret Rouge were anonymous, with no identifying words or symbols; some had inscriptions, regimental badges, Irish harps, springboks, maple leaves, New Zealand ferns. Most had Christian crosses; only three displayed the Star of David. Private Andrade, Private Levy, and Private Moss. A British soldier buried beneath the Star of David: she kept her eyes on that. Sam had written from training camp that the fellows chaffed him, but he had always been Jewy Moss at school, too, and they were good fellows, most of them, as good inside the barracks as outside, anyway. They made the same remarks he'd heard before, but Jewy Moss was a British soldier, good enough to fight and die with his comrades, which is what he had done, and what he was remembered for. She pushed away the second war, which muddled things. He was a British soldier, East Lancashire Regiment, buried at Cabaret Rouge beneath the Star of David.



She wondered when they would plow them up, Herbécourt, Devonshire, Quarry, Blighty Valley, Ulster Tower, Thistle Dump, and Caterpillar Valley; Maison Blanche and Cabaret Rouge. They said they never would. This land, she read everywhere, was the "free gift of the French people for the perpetual resting place of those who are laid there . . ." and so on. "EVERMORE," they said, and she wanted to hear: for all future time. The War Graves Commission, her successive Members of Parliament, the Foreign Office, the commanding officer of Sammy's regiment all told her the same. She didn't believe them. Soon—in fifty years or so—everyone who had served in the Great War would be dead; and at some point after that, everyone who had known anyone who had served would also be dead. What if memory grafting did not work, or the memories themselves were deemed shameful? First, she guessed, those little stone tablets in the back lanes would be chiselled out, since the French and the Germans had officially stopped hating one another years ago, and it would not do for German tourists to be accused of the cowardly assassinations perpetrated by their ancestors. Then the war memorials would come down, with their important statistics. A few might be held to have architectural interest; but some new, cheerful generation would find them morbid, and dream up better things to enliven the villages. And, after that, it would be time to plow up the cemeteries, to put them back to good agricultural use: they had lain fallow for too long. Priests and politicians would make it all right, and the farmers would get their land back, fertilized with blood and bone. The Thiepval arch might be preserved, but would they keep Brigadier Sir Frank Higginson's domed portico? That elbow in the D-937 would be declared a traffic hazard; all it needed was one drunken casualty for the road to be made straight again after all these years. Then the great forgetting could begin, the fading into the landscape. The war would be levelled to a couple of museums, a set of demonstration trenches, and a few names, shorthand for pointless sacrifice.

Might there be one last, fiery glow of remembering? In her own case, it would not be long before her annual renewals ceased, before the clerical error of her life was corrected; yet even as she pronounced herself an antique, her memories seemed to sharpen. If this happened to the individual, could it not also happen on a national scale? Might there not be, at some point in the first decades of the twenty-first century, one final moment, lit by evening sun, before the whole thing was handed over to the archivists? Might there not be a great looking-back down the mown grass of the decades, might not a gap in the trees discover the curving ranks of slender headstones, white tablets holding up to the eye their bright names and terrifying dates, their harps and springboks, maple leaves and ferns, their Christian crosses and their Stars of David? Then, in the space of a wet blink, the gap in the trees would close and the mown grass disappear, a violent indigo cloud would cover the sun, and history, gross history, daily history, would forget. Is this how it would be? ♦



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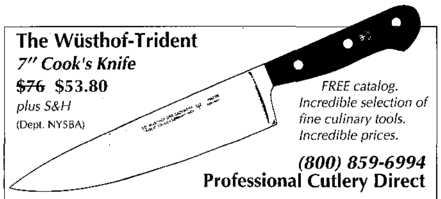

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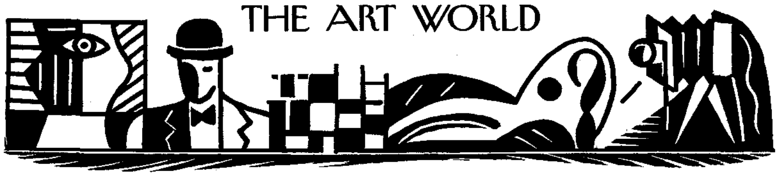


DID HE DO IT?

Sleuthing at the Met's Rembrandt show.

BY SIMON SCHAMA

Is "Rembrandt/Not Rembrandt" (at the Metropolitan Museum until January 7th) the first interactive Old Master exhibition? The Met, usually busy instructing visitors on what to see and how to admire, has paid the public the shocking compliment of asking it to exercise its own judgment. We supply the art and the information, you bring your common sense, is the spirit of the show—which is nothing short of heresy in matters generally reserved to the priesthood of experts ordained to determine what is, and what is not, a Rembrandt.

Unlike the coolly exquisite Raphael or the sumptuous, esoteric Rubens, Rembrandt has long been Everyman's Old Master: emotionally direct, universally accessible. It's this proprietorial relationship the public has with Rembrandt that has made a series of verdicts handed down by a remote and august body in Amsterdam so unsettling. It is decreed, for example, that long-cherished icons like the "Young Woman at an Open Half-Door," in Chicago, and the Frick's "Polish Rider" are now to be considered the work of Rembrandt clones like Samuel van Hoogstraten and Willem Drost. But with this exhibition's honest effort to present both the evidence on which such judgments are made and the process by which they are arrived at, the public has been promoted from a passive receiver of bad news to an active participant in the argument. What makes this show such an unmistakably American event is the cheerful faith that, given the material evidence and a crash course in close attentiveness, it should be possible to create a democracy of connoisseurs.

The insistence on unveiling these mysteries is all the more welcome because, from the outset, connoisseurship has presented itself as an arcane craft. Its forensic mode of operation was first established in the eighteen-seventies, by the Italian physician Giovanni Morelli. Morelli's corrections of Renaissance misattributions were illustrated with detailed anatomical drawings that made them resemble pathology manuals. For Morelli, innovations in criminology, such as fingerprinting, photographic archives, and handwriting analysis, were of the utmost relevance in the reconstruction of authorship. Nothing stirred him more than the illumination provided by clues—the inadvertent eloquence of apparently trivial detail. Precisely because it would be habitually rather than studiously rendered, the curve of an earlobe or the moon of a cuticle would, in his view, betray authenticity or fraud more decisively than the self-consciously crafted manner in which a painter executed a smile.

Not surprisingly, Morelli and the connoisseurs who followed his example have often been compared to Sherlock Holmes. Their tracking skills, like the great detective's, depended on a divining "eye"—a gift of superior vision denied to the amateur. The etymology of "connoisseur" (in Dutch the word is *kenner*) implies higher knowledge. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Rembrandt-*kenners* like Abraham Bredius and Cornelis Hofstede de Groot found that not only was the laity in awe of this knowledge but dealers and museum curators were prepared to pay for its practical exercise.

The great nineteenth-century French critic Théophile Thoré was thinking of Rembrandt when he declared that "to be a master means not to be similar to anybody." Precisely because of this obsession with singularity, the certification of Rembrandts became the litmus test of modern connoisseurship. Furthermore, in the early decades of this century, supplying "real" Rembrandts satisfied a growing appetite in the museums of Europe and America. Earlier, the Romantics had adopted Rembrandt as their one true godfather: the scruffy bohemian who had poked the polite burghers of Amsterdam in the eye with his coarse paintings of the common people, and who had been punished for his temerity. But by the turn of the century the mythology of the artist-rebel had itself become a bourgeois fashion—particularly if the rebel was safely dead. The same curators who would never have let a van Gogh or a Manet cross their threshold rushed to acquire one of Rembrandt's glinting caverns of darkness or one of his canvases covered in clotted ropes of impasto.

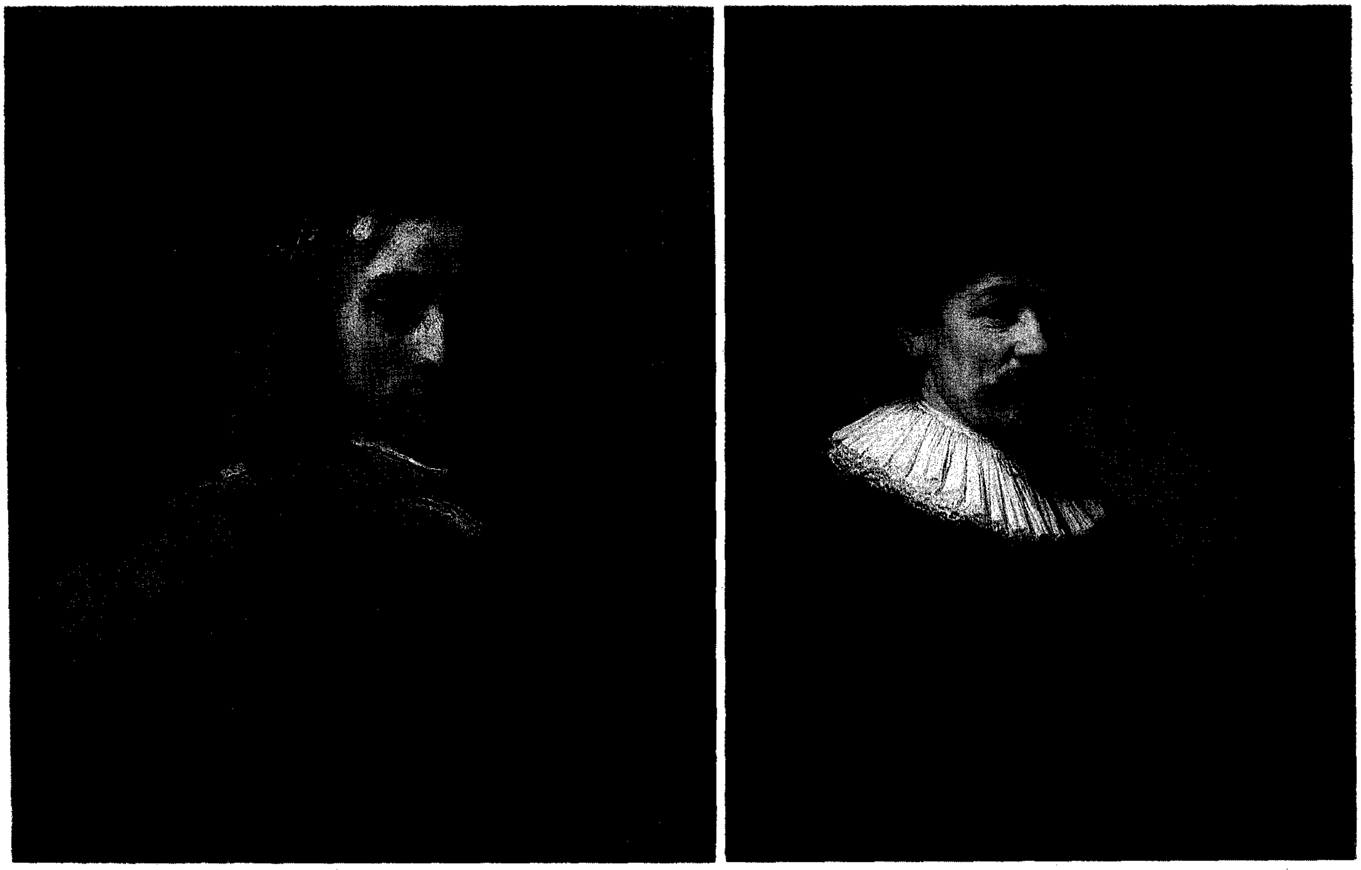
So for about three-quarters of a century it rained Rembrandts. Wrinkled matriarchs, street-corner apostles, and doughy girls done up in silks and flowers appeared with amazing regularity in the salesrooms and galleries. In 1868, Carel Vosmaer, one of the first serious Rembrandt-counters, listed three hundred and forty-two works; by 1915, Hofstede de Groot, famed for his fastidiousness, had certified nine hundred and eighty-eight. By the thirties, a third of this bloated corpus had fallen away, but the former Met curator W. R. Valentiner, in his astonishing "Rembrandt Paintings in America" (1931), nevertheless managed to include virtually anything that looked brownish-goldish and dashing-oldish, especially if it came with thickly loaded brushwork or signs of a heavily applied palette knife.

By the three-hundredth anniversary of Rembrandt's death, in 1969, the mood had turned sharply deflationary. Archival documentation, which had been frustrated by a Master who had left only seven known letters, began to yield a wealth of fresh information on Rembrandt's patrons, his in-laws, his court cases, and his students. The isolated virtuoso now sprouted connections with the urban culture of the Dutch Republic, with the traditions he drew on, and with his pupils, to whom he liberally passed his techniques. The singular Rembrandt had turned plural.

Scholars had long known the identity of many of Rembrandt's most conspicuous students, including Gerard Dou, Govert Flinck, and Samuel van Hoogstraten. But as researchers turned up less familiar names—Constantijn van Renesse, Jan Victors, and Willem Drost—the composition of an entire Rembrandt school became a major preoccupation of scholars. Paradoxically, the rapid growth of the look-alike industry was what provided the Rembrandt Research Project with its mission of sifting, once and for all, the wheat from the chaff. And while the Amsterdam-based project was established, in 1968, essentially as a committee of *kenners*, its experts were no longer willing to put their faith solely in the sharpness of their collective "eye." Instead, a new generation of techno-toys was marshalled to probe beneath the skin of the paintings and to deliver final, irrefutable verdicts. No self-respecting Rembrandt exhibition catalogue these days is complete without X radiographs, infrared spectroscopy, autoradiographs, canvas-warp-and-woof counts, dendrochronological (tree-ring) analysis of panels, and microscopically differentiated strata of grounds, glazes, and pigments. But the techno-*kenners* had hardly donned their lab coats before it became apparent that scientific investigation was a lot stronger on promise than on delivery. For while dating wood or cloth samples could distinguish paintings made in Rembrandt's lifetime from later imitations, the vast bulk of questionable work originated from Rembrandt's own period—and, in more than one instance, from the Master's own studio. Technology, it seems, is good for exposing fakes but no good for winnowing out Rembrandt wannabes.

"REMBRANDT/NOT REMBRANDT" is of two minds about the oracular powers of technology: the exhibition presents its scientific evidence in the form of photographs and other graphic displays, but also supplies ample reason not to put much faith in such evidence. This is not surprising, since the show is actually the product of two minds: it was organized by Hubert von Sonnenburg, the head of the Met's conservation department, and Walter Liedtke, the museum's curator of Northern European paintings. Given the obvious differences between their approaches—guess which one is more enamored of the power of science—the self-conscious gesture of publishing the exhibition catalogue in two separate volumes probably wasn't necessary. As it is, "Rembrandt/Not Rembrandt," although admirable in many ways, suffers from creative schizophrenia. Even the definition of connoisseurship offered in Liedtke's excellent catalogue essay differs tellingly from the wall caption that greets visitors at the start of the show. Liedtke defines connoisseurship traditionally, as "the determination of which paintings are by Rembrandt and which are not," and, indeed, the promise of mysteries solved is the promotional lure the show offers. But in the introductory text on the museum wall a postmodernist Fifth Column (until now incredibly well hidden at the Met) has defined connoisseurship as "an ongoing process, a form of criticism and self-criticism"—a formulation that would have had an old *kenner* like Bredius reaching for his smelling salts.

I once had a student who, after a lecture, complained, "You know, Professor Schama, my parents aren't paying all this money for me to become more confused." Since what may strike specialists as refreshing candor risks leaving the public anxious, graduates of "Rembrandt/Not Rembrandt" can be forgiven for feeling the same way. In addition to



"Young Man in a Red Cloak" (ca. 1650s), by a follower of Rembrandt, and "Herman Doomer" (1640), by the Master.

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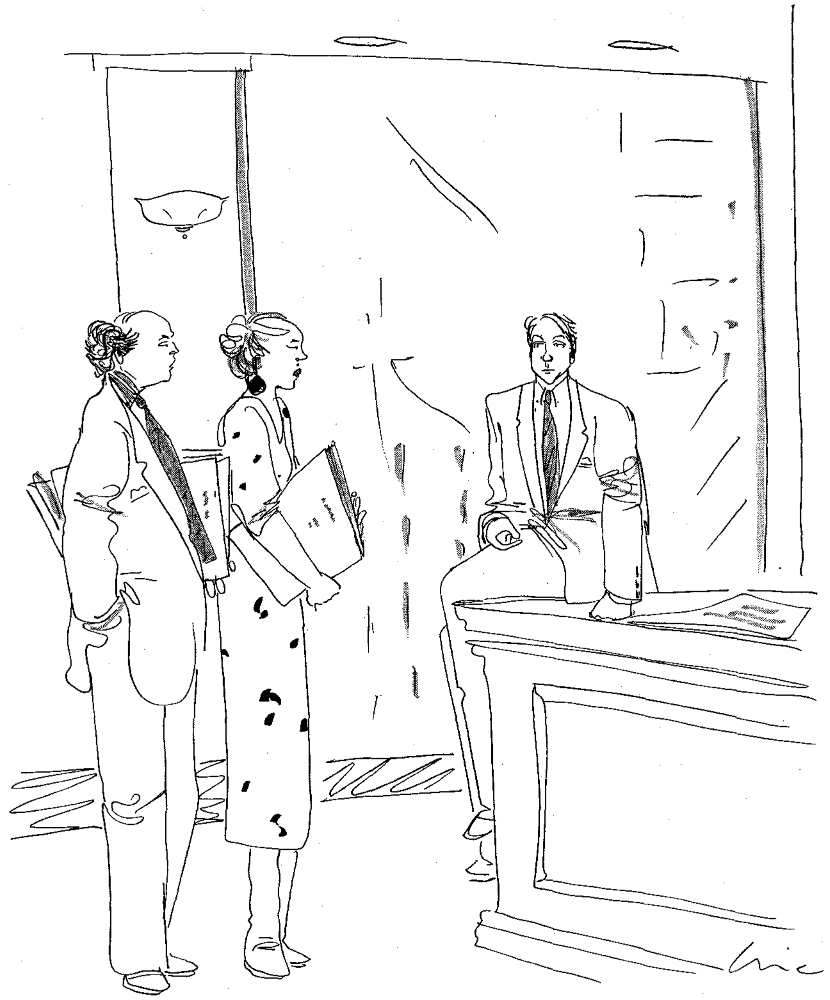
accustoming themselves to twin captions in disputed cases (so that spotting the initials W.L. or H.v.S. becomes as important as looking for *Rembrandt fecit*), visitors have to negotiate their way through a bewildering and inconsistently applied set of terms that are used to classify the Not Rembrandts. One encounters "Follower of," "Imitator of," "Copy after," "Style of," and "School of," among others.

There are other ways, too, in which the posture of transparency actually serves to make matters more, rather than less, obscure. The interests of total disclosure seem to have required von Sonnenburg, in his essay, to catalogue technical details more exhaustively than any layman could possibly want him to. It's good to know, I suppose, that to fill "cradle voids" (don't ask) he is using "Elvacite 2046" rather than, say, Tru-Value superglue, but it doesn't do much to edify the perplexed. Moreover, the efficacy of using X rays to distinguish between Rembrandt and his imitators seems to depend on prior, subjective assumptions about exactly which kind of brushwork exemplified the true techniques of the Master. It's disconcerting to be told by von Sonnenburg to look for "nervous, feathery, interwoven" strokes as the sign of the real thing in portraits of the sixteen-thirties, only to have a dab-and-inspect buildup of impasto rejected as prohibitively un-Rembrandtesque a little later. On the other hand, the innocent display of seventeenth-century artists' materials, including the lampblack and chimney soot that Rembrandt used in undersketches, and the ground glass he added to pigment to lend it greater luminosity, brings a magical touch of immediacy to a show that sometimes threatens to turn into a seminar.

It's not all hard work. The modest scale of the Metropolitan's exhibition, drawn entirely from its own collection, allows for thoughtful and unforced comparisons. (There are fifty-five paintings, including twenty or so certified Rem-



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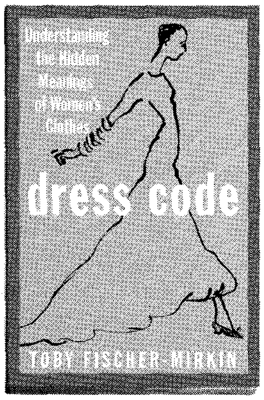

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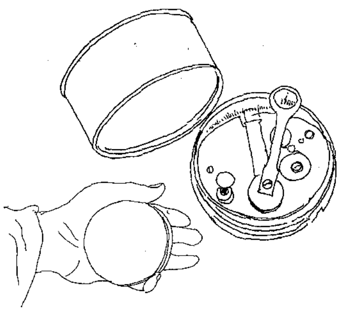
brandts, and sixty-two drawings and prints.) This is far less taxing than the 1991-92 travelling show "Rembrandt: The Master and His Workshop," which was conceived principally as a showcase for the findings of the Rembrandt Research Project. Where that earlier show segregated the officially accepted Rembrandts from paintings said to have been produced in a "workshop" (a business enterprise whose existence, Walter Liedtke argues, is unsupported by any persuasive historical evidence), the Met presents indisputable, documented masterpieces like the "Herman Doomer" and "Aristotle with a Bust of Homer" interspersed with works of uneven quality suggesting more than one hand; with works tentatively (or not so tentatively) reassigned; and with paintings by artists who simply came under Rembrandt's influence. Some of the offerings in this last category, including the ingratiating genre pieces of Nicolaes Maes and the prosaically bright paintings of Jan Victors, display characteristics fundamentally irreconcilable with Rembrandt's hallmark work. As for Drost, a little display of his dreamily tenebrous Italianate portraits, all smoke and velvet, doesn't do much to promote his candidacy for the Best Not Rembrandt award—especially when his "Sybil" invidiously shares exhibition space with the stupendously beautiful late Rembrandt "Woman with a Pink."

Names and I.D.s of alternative artists are not really essential in order to recognize that some paintings done in a Rembrandtesque manner are merely laborious exercises in emulation. Comparing the respective sleeves of the "Aristotle" and the so-called "Auctioneer" reveals one hand miraculously confident of conveying illuminated texture through the freest but most precisely delivered brushwork and another that has to settle for a perspiring approximation, an optimistically loose *impression*. But solid-gold masterpieces can themselves be misleading indices of Rembrandtness. Like most great painters, Rembrandt was perfectly capable, at virtually all stages of his career, of producing work of distinctly sub-masterpiece calibre. He was also given to restless reinventions of his own chosen idiom, sometimes within the same year, or even within the same commission, if, for example, it was a pendant pair of marriage portraits. The twisted angle of the pose in "Woman with a Fan," the bril-

Scan the horizon.



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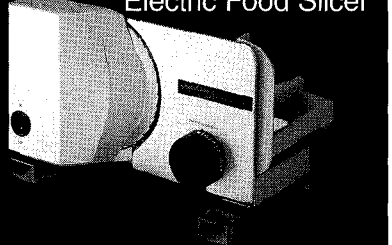

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liant shaft of light slanting across her right wrist, and the whisper of a smile held in her right eye's catchlight make clear the identity of the painter. The much less inventive treatment of the female half of the so-called Berestyn portraits, executed at about the same time, doesn't necessarily announce the work of someone else, however. For although the Berestyn woman's head seems to have been awkwardly hoisted onto its millstone collar, the impression of discontinuity with the body may be as much an effect of the archaic costume as of some perceived fault of composition. No one argues with the brilliant rendering of her husband's eyes and collar, or, for that matter, with the gold brocade or the shadow cast by the wife's powder-puff hair, which announce Rembrandt at his silky best. Occasionally, it can seem as though multiple Rembrandts were occupying a single canvas, as in the "Herman Doomer" portrait, where the bold manipulator of impasto in the virtuoso rendering of the collar exists alongside the miniaturist of the eyelid.

In the end, the virtue of this interesting and courageous exhibition may not lie in its pretense of enlisting the public in a curatorial version of "You, the Jury" or in its offering the opportunity to mull over the vicissitudes of connoisseurship (though a spacious mulling room adorned with photographs of generations of *kenners* has been thoughtfully provided). While it's pleasant to browse among the works of Backer and van den Eeckhout and Maes, some of them very nice, it would be a pity if it took time away from noticing, say, the perfect bead of light glancing off Aristotle's ring—a detail added by Rembrandt to direct our attention to his subject's thoughtful fondling of the heavy chain of honor; or the animating highlight at the base of Doomer's cornea, where it meets the edge of the lower eyelid; or the rhyming arabesque gathers of the turban and the filament-shot scarf of the "Noble Slav"; or the savage sabre-slash of flesh pink applied at the side of the syphilitic snout of Gerard de Lairesse; or the single pearl drop depending from a headband that soaks up the light on the broad-boned forehead of the "Woman with a Pink," above the great pile of crimson fabric cascading down into darkness. Whatever the lessons of this show, it doesn't take a connoisseur to know that these miracles are not Not Rembrandt. ♦

SHOWCASE

COLM TÓIBÍN

COLM TÓIBÍN once wrote a small book, "Walking Along the Border," which has him roaming between Ireland's North and its South, slipping through fences. At one point, he visits an ancient circle of stones, but he does not stay long. He walks away from the circle because it evokes a sense of unity. This sense is painful to Tóibín, because it is "a reminder that there was once a time in this place when there were no Catholics or Protestants"—that there was "once a history which could do us no harm, could not teach us, inspire us, remind us, beckon us, embitter us." So he walks away.

Eight years have passed since then, and Tóibín, now forty, has been winning prizes. He began as a journalist and edited a magazine, *Magill,* based in Dublin. But he seems to have always been going somewhere else—to Sudan, to Argentina, and, especially, to Spain. He wrote a lovely nonfiction book, underappreciated in this country, called "Homage to Barcelona." And he wrote two tightly controlled, devastating novels: "The South" (1990) and "The Heather Blazing" (1992). Each features a central character who has trouble communicating and finds that aging does not make it any easier. The first novel takes place mainly in Catalonia but winds up in Enniscorthy; the second one rarely leaves Enniscorthy and its surroundings. Tóibín grew up there in County Wexford.

In his work, Tóibín circles around Enniscorthy and Ireland and the Church and his father, who died when Tóibín was still a boy. History, both intimate and public, captivates him. His most recent book, "Sign of the Cross: Travels in Catholic Europe" (Pantheon; $24), begins and ends in Enniscorthy. In between, he manages to hit a staggering number of Catholic festivities: Holy Weeks in Poland, Spain, and Italy; pilgrimages to Lourdes and Santiago de Compostela; a visitation from the Virgin in Croatia. By now, the Pope must know his face. Truly, the book is a month of Sundays.

Tóibín has no easy time communicating his feelings about the Church. He doesn't much like it—it threatens to push him backward—and, however dazzling the festival, he's always looking for a ticket out the next morning. He believes Catholicism to be a ruse, but a ruse without a point. And so not, really, a ruse at all but a sort of vital mummery that bewitches and repels him in an oscillation that will not, one imagines, end soon.

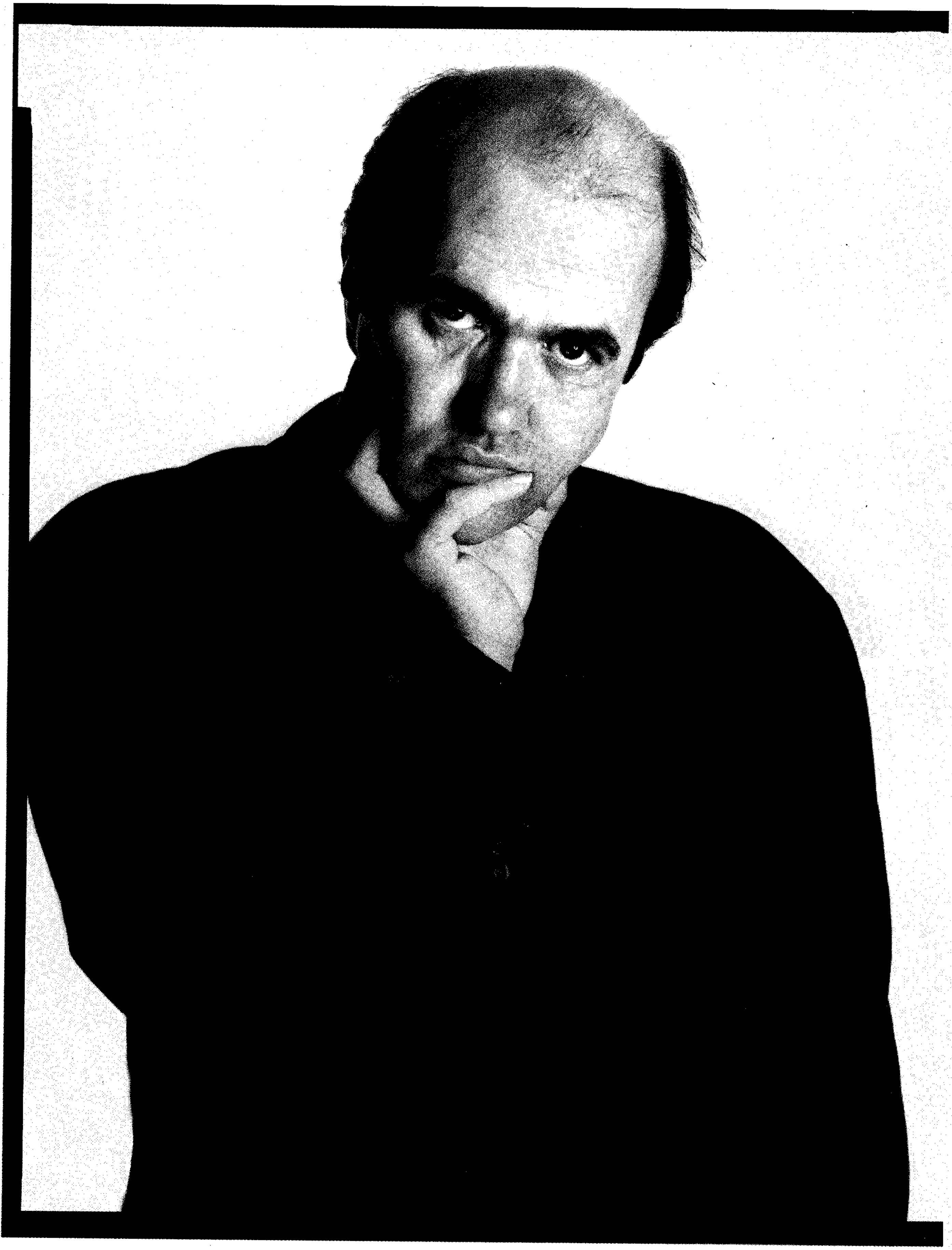
At the book's center is a chapter that begins, "Maybe there are things I should explain." That "maybe," in its tentativeness, is distinctly Tóibín. He goes on to recount a grim weekend of group therapy during which he lies on a mattress rocking, crying, wailing for and at his dead father—"I couldn't stop, or at least I did not know whether I could or not because I did not try: I seemed to want this to happen." That "seemed" is distinctly Tóibín. Overcome by his own howling, he finds himself longing to make the sign of the cross over his father.

In "The Heather Blazing," the protagonist's father, who is a schoolteacher (as was Tóibín's), has a stroke. He continues to teach. On one occasion, words fail him, yet he proceeds, desperately burbling, pantomiming the lesson. His horrified son, at the back of the class, "wanted to shout out to him to stop, please stop, could he not understand that the sounds he was making made no sense?" In Tóibín's disturbing body of work, the inarticulate, mulish past always recaptures us. History teaches, inspires, embitters, and harms us. Tóibín's genius is that he makes it impossible for us to walk away.

—Scott L. Malcomson

PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD AVEDON

Dublin, September 29, 1994.



BOOKS

RIGHTS TO LIFE

Are scientists wrong to patent genes?

BY MALCOLM GLADWELL

In 1972, Ananda Chakrabarty, a microbiologist at General Electric, created a genetically engineered strain of bacteria capable of breaking down crude oil. Chakrabarty then filed for a patent, arguing that the laboratory creation—a living, growing microscopic life-form—was rightfully his. Eight years and three appeals later, the Supreme Court ruled in his favor. Science hasn't been the same since.

Until the Chakrabarty decision, no one had ever received a patent on a genetically engineered organism. Life, in all its manifestations, was thought to be unpatentable. Until Chakrabarty, in fact, even the idea that scientists might own and profit from life-forms they had created was unheard of. Biology, according to its romantic self-image, was about the pure and selfless pursuit of knowledge, about publishing and sharing, about coöperation and collaboration. But the Court's decision—five to four—in Diamond v. Chakrabarty changed the rules. If life could be patented, then those who worked with life could be entrepreneurs. And if biologists were potential entrepreneurs then genetic science itself had implicitly become a commercial enterprise, subject as much to the competitive and acquisitive culture of the marketplace as to the collaborative culture of the laboratory.

Today, just fifteen years after the Chakrabarty decision, hundreds of university scientists have deals on the side with private companies, and it is now inconceivable that a scientist would make a valuable genetic discovery and *not* patent it. A year ago, after one of the longest and most extensive gene hunts in history, a team led by scientists at the University of Utah announced that they had succeeded in finding BRCA1, the so-called breast-cancer gene. Soon after, they announced that they had filed for a patent on the gene, that the gene's rights had been sold to a major pharmaceutical company, and that a small biotech company they had founded would immediately start using the gene to make a diagnostic test.

Peter Gorner and Jeff Lyon: Worrying about the implications of DNA for dollars.

JW STEWART

In one way or another, the major concerns that continue to surround genetic engineering all center on this transformation. Few people worry any more about the value or the safety of DNA research, but there remains a sense that the union of commerce and genetics is somehow unseemly—that money and DNA don't mix. When, for example, the announcement was made that BRCA1 had been found and a patent was being sought, the immediate response of some health advocates was not joy over the speed at which the research was being turned into something useful but dismay at the fact that the gene had become private property.

There is even a campaign afoot, kicked off last spring by a broad coalition of rabbis and clergy, to ban gene patents altogether. Although they are not opposed to genetic engineering itself, the campaign's leaders object to the idea that a scientist or a company should be allowed to own the fruits of human and animal genetic experimentation. Life, they maintain, belongs to God, and not to man.

What should we make of this dissension? Do gene patenting and the resulting commercialization of genetic science really cross moral and ethical lines? These questions lie at the heart of two recent and engrossing accounts of the new biology. The books take on very different subjects, and they reach very different conclusions, but together they provide an excellent introduction to the debate that, according to one leader of the anti-Chakrabarty movement, may "dwarf the pro-life debate within a few years."

"Altered Fates" (Norton; $27.50), by Jeff Lyon and Peter Gorner, two Pulitzer Prize-winning science writers at the Chicago *Tribune*, is the story of the rise of gene therapy: the emerging art of treating disease by replacing or repairing defective genes. Traditionally, biotechnology has used the human body as a kind of pharmacy—a source for new therapeutic compounds, which can be cloned, manufactured, and administered just like any other drugs. But gene therapy goes one step further. It involves treating disease by direct intervention at the genetic level. Typically, gene-therapy researchers use as their tool retroviruses—the viruses (of which H.I.V. is one) that do their damage by inserting their DNA directly into the nuclei of the cells that they infect. When those cells grow and divide, the retroviruses divide and spread along with them, which makes them an ideal means of inserting new and helpful genes in human cells. Gene therapists take a retrovirus and strip it of all the genes that make it dangerous: they disarm it. Then they add the gene that is missing or defective in the disease they want to treat, and infect the patient with the modified virus. With luck, the virus will splice the new gene into enough of the patient's cells so that his or her genetic dysfunction can be corrected.

Much of "Altered Fates" is given over to a detailed and fascinating history of the very first gene-therapy experiment: the daring and, ultimately, successful treatment by a National Institutes of Health researcher, William French Anderson, of a young girl suffering from A.D.A. deficiency, a rare immunological disorder known popularly as "bubble-baby disease." The balance of the book is an exploration of the potential uses of this technique, since there are, at least in theory, very few diseases that will not be amenable in some way to genetic intervention. High blood pressure? Replace the genes that predispose some people to hypertension with a set of genes that don't. Breast cancer? Identify every woman carrying defective genes of the kind that lead to breast tumors, and replace those genes.

Some of these experiments are years away, of course. But it's possible to see in their range an explanation of why biotechnology has evolved in such a dramatic—and, for some, vexing—way. It was once the case that basic science and the kind of applied biomedicine that resulted in the invention of drugs were two entirely distinct phenomena. At one end of the chain, a scientist might notice that a certain chemical compound had certain interesting properties in the test tube. At the other end, a drug company might take that compound, test and retest it, try it out on mice and maybe on monkeys, pray that it didn't have weird side effects, and try to figure out how to manufacture it; then, tens of millions of dollars and a decade or more later, that compound could maybe—just maybe—make it to the marketplace.

Now the gap between basic and applied research has been narrowed. Gene therapy means that the minute you find and decode a gene that plays a key role in disease you have something of value, and that discovery can be patented and protected. It can be cloned and grown in a laboratory, without the millions of dollars in production costs that a conventional pharmaceutical house needs for such research. In short, the financial and technical barriers to entering the pharmaceutical industry are being removed, which is why virtually all the major players in gene therapy have either formed alliances with private industry or founded biotech firms themselves.

This is a prospect that Lyon and Gorner—like the religious coalition formed last spring—find troubling. Greed, they write, rather than "scaremongering and eugenics scenarios," is the biggest long-term threat to gene therapy. Biologists have been "shameless," often "shattering the boundaries of good taste in their zeal to form private companies, join advisory boards of start-ups, welcome venture capitalists into their labs, and accept equity positions with the promise of lucrative stock deals down the road." Statements such as "The pursuit of pecuniary gain interferes with the process of seeking truth, most people believe" abound. Piece by piece, the genetic information found inside every human being is being decoded, patented, and sold off to the highest bidder, and Lyon and Gorner are not happy.

These are serious charges, but the authors don't do a very good job of substantiating them. Why is the rush by scientists to form companies, for example, evidence of greed and shamelessness? How, exactly, does the pursuit of pecuniary gain interfere with the process of seeking the truth? Isn't the extraordinary access that gene scientists have to biological "truth" the reason they are worth so much money? And wouldn't the real ethical lapse be for gene therapists, having conceived of technologies with vast and immediate therapeutic value, *not* to try and bring them to market as quickly as possible?

The irony is that only a few years ago the most persistent complaint against medical science was that it was too removed from the needs of patients and too slow in translating laboratory work into something useful. Now, just at the moment when the emerging fields of genetic engineering seem to have answered those complaints, people like Gorner and Lyon have decided that they don't like market-oriented science after all. It is tempting to conclude that Gorner and Lyon are simply hostile to the commercial world, but that may be un-

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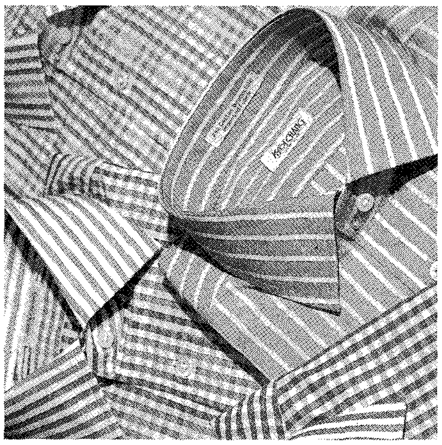

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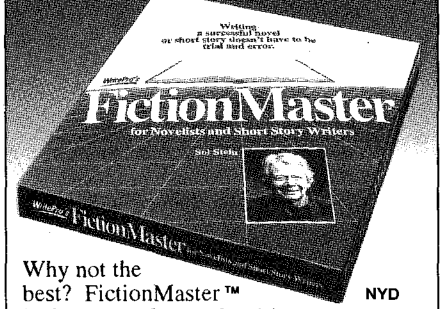
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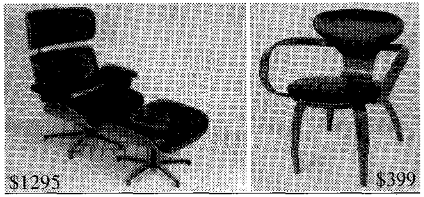

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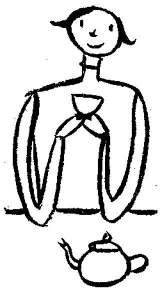
fair. It may just be that, like so many of the contemporary critics of biotechnology, they don't understand it.

TAKE the Chakrabarty case, for instance, which began this whole controversy. Legal doctrine in the United States holds that products of nature are not patentable. Stumbling onto a new form of precious stone in a desert doesn't give you patent rights to that object. You didn't invent the stone. You merely found it. But in 1980 the Supreme Court ruled that Chakrabarty's bacteria could be patented because they had been genetically altered—modified and perfected by his own ingenuity.



The well-known ethicist Leon Kass argued in his 1985 book, "Toward a More Natural Science," that the Court's decision overstated the extent of Chakrabarty's contribution. Chakrabarty did not deserve a patent, Kass wrote, because he himself did not create the new bacteria: "Rather, he played the matchmaker for a shotgun wedding . . . while the living organisms did the work." This is the secular version of the point made by the religious critics of Chakrabarty. To them, the granting of gene patents represents a usurpation of God's position as the father of life. These are superficially appealing arguments, but they miss the point. Patent law has never pretended that the inventor plays the role of creator. If it did, precious little in our world could be patented. Patent law is a much more modest undertaking: it is about encouraging people to advance human understanding, to make inventive and useful contributions to society.

That is just what Chakrabarty did, and that is clearly what gene hunters do. To receive a patent on a gene, scientists specify where the gene is situated, what its exact genetic sequence is, what function it performs in the body, and what they intend to do with their discovery—and none of these are trivial accomplishments. BRCA1, for example, was hunted for four years by a dozen major research teams around the world at a cost of tens of millions of dollars. The winner was the University of Utah team, which cleverly used genealogical records compiled by the Mormon church to zero in on families that passed the defective gene from generation to generation. The Utah team did not invent BRCA1. But through its own ingenuity and effort it was the first to unlock the gene's secrets. If you can get a patent for building a better mousetrap, it is very hard to argue that you don't deserve a patent for decoding the mysteries of breast cancer.

A patent is more than a reward for ingenuity, however. It also represents a deliberate attempt to keep the process of discovery open. Had the Court ruled against Chakrabarty, gene-hunting would have descended into secrecy. Why would any researcher disclose his discovery if a competitor could steal it without repercussion? A patent, in this sense, represents a trade. The patent office grants a scientist a twenty-year exclusive commercial license for his gene. In exchange, the scientist agrees to disclose everything he knows about the gene, so that other scientists can use that information and the scientific process can go on. This does not sound like a major ethical transgression. It sounds like an intelligent compromise.

This is not to say that the introduction of patents into the laboratory has had no effect on the way in which research is conducted. Margaret Heckler, the Secretary of Health and Human Services in the Reagan Administration, once described the N.I.H. as "an island of objective and pristine scientific research excellence untainted by commercialization influences." That was twelve years ago. Today, numerous N.I.H. employees hold patents and others have been permitted to form alliances with outside companies—deals that can place limits on the scientists' ability to collaborate. Gorner and Lyon are right to see this as a problem. But what they don't seem to appreciate is that, like gene-patenting, this change in the scientific culture represents a reasonable compromise in the name of pushing research forward. This is a point grasped far more successfully by Barry Werth in "The Billion-Dollar Molecule" (Touchstone; $14), his account of four years in the life of Vertex Pharmaceuticals, a small Cambridge, Massachusetts, drug startup.

VERTEX is engaged in what is known as "rational drug design"—a new approach to making drugs which, like gene therapy, emerged from the biomedical explosion of the past twenty years. Many drugs—that is, standard chemical compounds—work by latching on to specific receptors on human cells, much as a key fits into a lock. Traditionally, a company screening for, say, a drug to combat H.I.V. would put a receptor from the virus in a test tube and then run thousands of chemical compounds through it, looking for the right chemical "key." Rational drug design, however, concentrates on the other end: it examines the lock. Scientists take the cell receptor they are interested in, break it down, put it on a computer, make a three-dimensional model of it, and then construct, molecule by molecule, a key that will fit into it. The consequences of this approach are enormous. The more nearly perfect the fit between the drug and the molecular lock, the better the drug works and the fewer side effects it causes. Having fewer side effects means that you can use higher doses, and at higher doses a whole range of drugs that now have only limited efficacy suddenly start to look like wonder drugs. Rational drug design is also, at least in theory, a dramatically cheaper way of finding new therapies. Screening programs cost tens of millions of dollars. Rational drug design can be conducted in a university laboratory, and that means that this technology, like gene therapy, has had the effect of narrowing the gap between basic and applied research and bringing the scientific and business worlds into close and, at times, uncomfortable union.

Vertex is just such a corporate-academic hybrid. Founded by Joshua Boger, who was a top executive at the giant drug firm Merck, it has a scientific advisory board studded with some of the biggest names in academic biomedicine, and its staff originally included members of university faculties. From the beginning, Vertex was an attempt to bring the creativity and flexibility of academic science to a private company.

The firm's vision, however, was repeatedly compromised. One of its earliest collaborations, for example, was with the Harvard University chemist Stuart Schreiber. Schreiber is one of the world's preëminent drug designers, and on paper the case for the two to work together was compelling. But Vertex is a business, trying to beat competitors to market, and Schreiber is an academic, accustomed to a freer exchange of ideas. The two quickly proved incompatible. "I'm not concerned that Stuart will find a compound that will compete with ours," Werth quotes Boger as saying. "But I'm tremendously concerned he may tell everyone in the world what we're doing." Boger, as Werth points out, "feared that Schreiber was 'persistently naive' about the need for secrecy."

As Vertex grows, the tensions between the company's scientific and corporate agendas become more and more apparent. Desperate to make scientific progress in order to satisfy the company's investors, Boger drives his scientists almost to exhaustion. There are screaming matches and alcohol-drenched interludes. One of the firm's top researchers boycotts a reception held for Vertex's Japanese backers, because of what he considers "a violation of the purity of science." Boger, who is one of the most brilliant chemists of his generation, becomes obsessed with financing his company. "As always the icy short-term pressure of raising money subsumed the vagaries of morality and social good," Werth writes, after Boger hesitates to invest heavily in a promising idea for an AIDS drug. "Vertex wouldn't pick the project that would benefit the most people or target the most pressing need; no company would. It would pick the project with the best overall chance of success, which first meant having a good story to tell investors. In that arena, by late 1990, AIDS was a tough sell."

It is everything that Lyon and Gorner fear will happen in the new world of science. Except for one thing: Vertex, under Boger's direction, makes astonishing strides. In the space of the four and a half years covered by Werth's book, Vertex goes from a bare-bones, twenty-three-person operation with only the vaguest scientific agenda to a hundred-and-thirty-five-person firm with six promising drug projects.

This is the tradeoff presented by the post-Chakrabarty world, and Werth captures it well. In a crucial passage he recounts a conversation he had with Manuel Navia, one of Vertex's top scientists. Navia was the first person to figure out the structure—in essence, to describe the lock—of a critical part of the AIDS virus known as H.I.V. prote-

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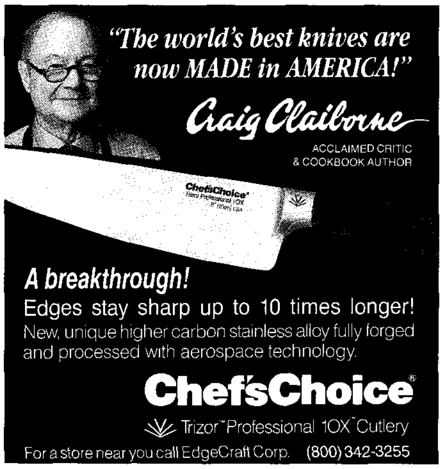

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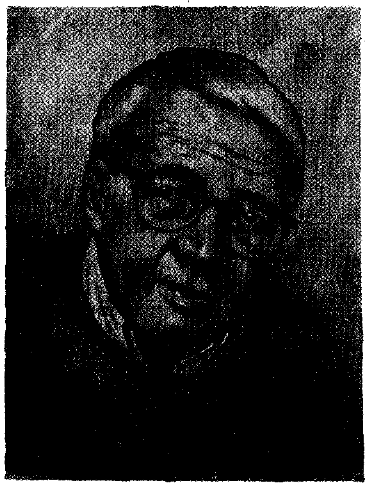
ase, and he published his findings, to great fanfare, in the distinguished journal *Nature*. But it soon became clear that he had made a mistake. In the frenzied, results-oriented atmosphere of commercial research, Navia had misinterpreted about fifteen per cent of the structure. It wasn't a critical fifteen per cent, and it made no difference to those who were using his model to design drugs to stop the virus. Nonetheless, Navia was widely criticized, his reputation savaged by academic competitors. According to Werth, though, Navia was unapologetic: " 'My personal mission is to use this methodology to make drugs. I'm not an academic. When you work in a place like this, and you're cranking out a structure in four months or nine months, you're cutting a lot of corners. You're *supposed* to cut corners. My job here is not . . . to provide them with perfect crystal structures two and a half years from now; it's to provide them with adequate crystal structures now.' "

This is not the voice of science corrupted by commerce. This is science in an honest struggle to balance the conflicting responsibilities of the laboratory, the marketplace, and the patient. Those who deny that this struggle is necessary—those who cringe at the thought of university researchers forming companies and "life" being patented—are those for whom science and research remain in some way a romanticized abstraction. It would be nice if science were still objective, pristine, and untainted by commercialization, but we are now demanding something more: we are demanding that it be useful. ♦

POETIC JUSTICE

Poems of rapture and restraint.

BY MARK STRAND

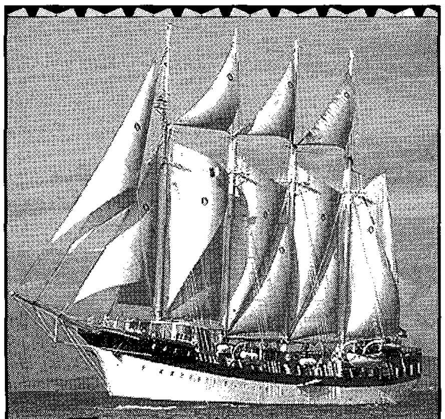


Donald Justice

JAMES BURRIS

DONALD JUSTICE'S "New and Selected Poems" (Knopf; $25) enacts a brilliant accommodation to almost everyone's expectations of poetry. The poems have a sweet and measured gravity that engages us on a level more profound than the one we usually find ourselves on. His early poems, in their evocation of simpler, though not necessarily better, times, recall John Crowe Ransom: they possess the same detachment, the same mix of elegance and decorum, the same reliance on narrative's charms as opposed to the sudden revelations of figurative language. But Justice's are plainer, less artificial, less given to periphrasis. And they are beautiful in ways that are often difficult to detect. Beyond the rhymes and the shapely stanzas, beyond the slightly rueful tone and the poised insistence on mortal matters, there is something else. They have a modesty—never declared, of course—that is extremely touching and inviting, as well as a hesitancy, accomplished by the use of the word "perhaps" or of a clause whose purpose is to defer the inevitable and give the reader time to savor the poem's tonality, its wit, its particular truth. Take "The Artist Orpheus," where Justice offers an original and brilliant revision of the Orpheus myth. This is the end of it:

He might have sworn that he did not look back,
That there was no one following on his track,
Only the thing was that it made a better story
To say that he had heard a sigh perhaps
And once or twice the sound a twig makes when it snaps.



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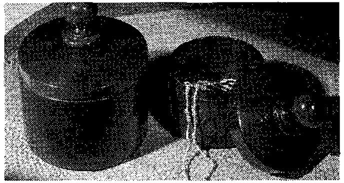

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Deferment of another sort—performative, comic—is carried out in a revision of the poet's traditional dependence on the muse ("The Telephone Number of the Muse"):

> Sleepily, the muse to me: "Let us be
> friends.
> Good friends, but only friends. You
> understand."
> And yawned. And kissed, for the last
> time, my ear.
> Who earlier, weeping at my touch, had
> whispered:
> "I loved you once." And: "No, I don't
> love him,
> Not after everything he did." Later,
> Rebuttoning her nightgown with my
> help:
> "Sorry, I just have no desire, it seems."

How convincingly this effortless, though syncopated, blank verse becomes plain speech. How easily the poet's commerce with his paramour becomes just another failed sexual escapade. The aging poet's inability to satisfy his muse suggests, naturally, his failing powers as a poet, but never has this been so delicately admitted, so unhistrionically accepted. And the poem ends without a trace of self-pity:

> I call her up sometimes, long distance
> now.
> And she still knows my voice, but I
> can hear,
> Beyond the music of her phonograph,
> The laughter of the young men with
> their keys.
>
> I have the number written down
> somewhere.

In speech that is more elaborate but no less convincing in its claims on our attention, Justice will extend a sentence not only for the pleasure of the rhymes but for the satisfactions of prolonging rapture, rapture that often has a languorous and collected air, as in the opening stanza of "Ode to a Dressmaker's Dummy":

> O my coy darling, still
> You wear for me the scent
> Of those long afternoons we spent,
> The two of us together,
> Safe in the attic from the jealous eyes
> Of household spies
> And the remote buffooneries of the weather;
> So high,
> Our sole remaining neighbor was the sky,
> Who, often enough, at dusk
> Leaning her cloudy shoulders on the sill,
> Used to regard us with a bored and cynical eye.

In reading Justice, one feels keenly that a poem is an act of retrieval—that, as it memorializes, so it revives. When Justice remembers the thirties, the decade of his youth, it is with a poignancy

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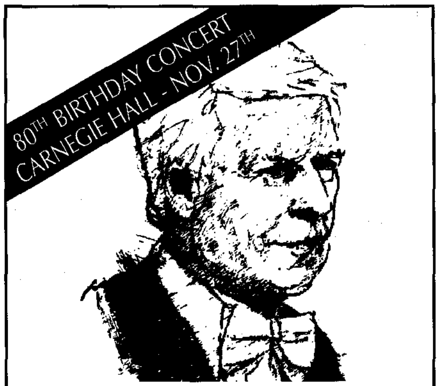

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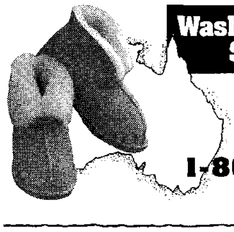

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rarely found in today's poetry. Memory and rapture are so closely intertwined that they become a single gesture of sustained regard. And though an intense nostalgia is the result, it is held in check by rigorous assertions of limitation, which in themselves give pleasure—the varied metre, the resourceful rhymes. An instance of this is his poem "Dance Lessons of the Thirties":

Wafts of old incense mixed with Cuban coffee
Hung on the air; a fan turned; it was summer.
And (of the buried life) some last aroma
Still clung to the tumbled cushions of the sofa.

At lesson time, pushed back, it used to be
The thing we managed somehow just to miss
With our last-second dips and whirls—all this
While the Victrola wound down gradually.

And this was their exile, those brave ladies who taught us
So much of art, and stepped off to their doom
Demonstrating the fox-trot with their daughters
Endlessly around some sad and makeshift ballroom.

O little lost Bohemias of the suburbs!

Justice's retrievals of a lost time are achieved not just by the shrewd and evocative detail. Most frequently and most spectacularly, he employs the refrain, and the form in which it occurs with the greatest regularity happens to be the villanelle—a form that Justice has experimented with perhaps more than any other poet now writing. A villanelle is a nineteen-line poem in which, among other things, two lines are used four times. The lines keep coming back at you, creating a counter-motion, a circularity, in which it is safe to talk about loss, because the feeling one gets reading a villanelle is that nothing is lost. The subject may be ruin—public or private—but the form is all recovery.

The connections Justice makes in his work are not only to his own past but to his literary precursors as well: the Spanish poets Lorca and Alberti, Rilke to a certain extent, Baudelaire to a greater extent, and Yeats, though he is not named in the back-of-the-book notes. Justice often pays homage to work he admires by writing a poem based on a poem, as in "Invitation to a Ghost," which leans heavily on Alberti's "The Coming Back of an Assassinated Poet." But where Alberti begins his poem by saying (to Lorca) "You have come back to me older and sadder," Justice begins his (to his friend the poet Henri Coulette) "I ask you to come back now as you were in youth."

The major influence, however, has been Wallace Stevens. Sometimes his debt to the Master is acknowledged directly; at others, it is only hinted at, as in "Variations for Two Pianos":

There is no music now in all Arkansas.
Higgins is gone, taking both his pianos.

Movers dismantled the instruments, away
Sped the vans. The first detour untuned the strings.

There is no music now in all Arkansas.

Up Main Street, past the cold shopfronts of Conway,
The brash, self-important brick of the college,

Higgins is gone, taking both his pianos.

Warm evenings, the windows open, he would play
Something of Mozart's for his pupils, the birds.

There is no music now in all Arkansas.

How shall the mockingbird mend her trill, the jay
His eccentric attack, lacking a teacher?

Higgins is gone, taking both his pianos.
There is no music now in all Arkansas.

Formal elaboration and musical erasure are perfectly balanced in this abbreviated villanelle. Its repetitions, its accretive energies seem to address the removal of the pianos by making a music of their absence. And though the poem is vintage Justice, it reminds one of Stevens' famous poem "Anecdote of the Jar." The comic grandiosity of "I placed a jar in Tennessee" is echoed by "There is no music now in all Arkansas." And the order created by Stevens' placement of the jar contrasts nicely with the disorder left by the removal of Higgins' pianos.

The remarkable feature of Justice's literary dependence is that it is so natural, so unshowy, and so much of a piece with his inclination to feel the exactions of time. He is not an allusive poet, making pointed references; rather, he absorbs the rhetorical stratagems of others—always, it seems, to meet his purposes, which are to give melancholy a precision without compromising its depth and to make even the most subtle and mysterious of our affections accessible. ◆

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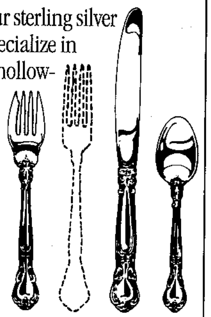

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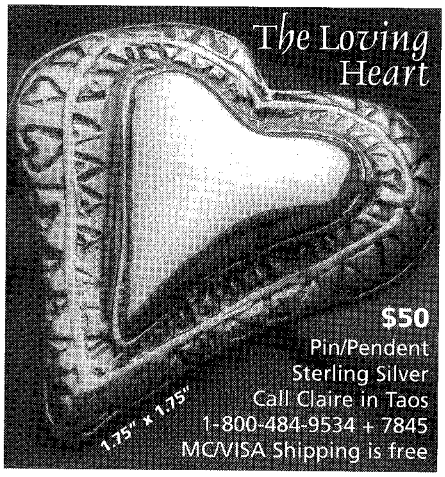
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Painted Desert
by Frederick Barthelme
(Viking; $22.95)

Televised spectacles of mayhem in Southern California propel Del and his girlfriend, Jen, a "cybermuckraker," on a cross-country anti-pilgrimage toward—maybe—Los Angeles. Jen's dad and her "non-harmonious" friend Penny join them for the air-cooled ride through the Southwest, where the four unsuspectingly drive past their tight cynicism into the open spaces of ironic wonderment. Laced with sharp dialogue and wit, this novel suggests that we are what we witness, whether it's the gypsum hills of White Sands or the slaying of a stranger a thousand miles away.

Edward Hopper: An Intimate Biography
by Gail Levin
(Knopf; $35)

Levin has written, in effect, a dual biography—a study of both Hopper, a major American painter, and his wife, Josephine Nivison, an all but unknown American painter—and it's a disturbing tale of closeness and cruelty. When the couple married, in 1924, both were beginning to receive recognition, but Nivison's achievement soon fell victim to Hopper's vociferous contempt for her work and his exploitation of her admiration for his art. This book, which draws on Nivison's diaries, is a miracle of frankness and psychological subtlety.

Virtual Equality
by Urvashi Vaid
(Anchor; $24.95)

This intelligent, forthright book by the former director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force contends that American homosexuals have achieved only the appearance of acceptance. Vaid argues for new tactics: grassroots organizing in alliance with other groups working for a just society. A lot of Vaid's information will be news to straight readers, much of it valuable and some of it—for example, the shrewd, vicious, well-funded homophobic campaign by the Christian right—frightening.

"Deaf Maggie Lee Sayre"
by Maggie Lee Sayre,
edited by Tom Rankin
(Mississippi; $35 cloth, $17.95 paper)

Austere and unaffected documents of a now vanished way of life, these photographs helped Maggie Lee Sayre, who was born deaf, in 1920, to communicate with the hearing world. Sayre, who lived most of her life on a houseboat with her family—fishermen on the rivers of Kentucky and Tennessee—photographed big fish, plentiful catches, and visits from friends and relatives. Most memorable are the shots of the houseboat itself: during a flood, tied in among bare-limbed trees; alone, in winter, on a river locked in ice.

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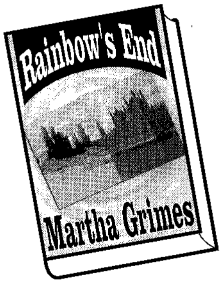

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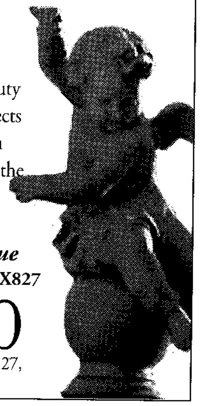

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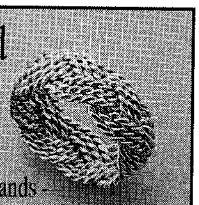

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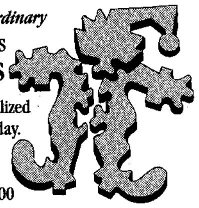

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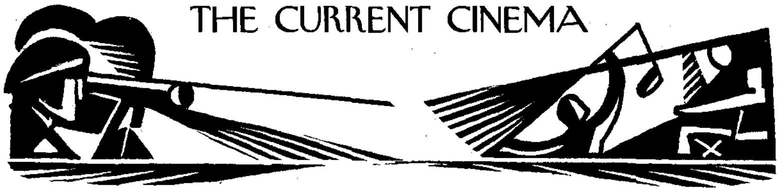
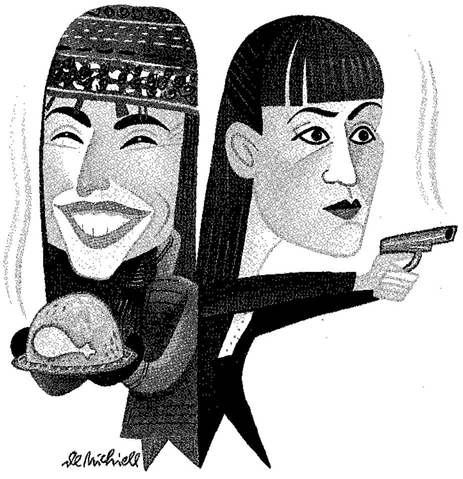


KIN AND KILLERS

Jodie Foster's "Home for the Holidays" and Jon Amiel's "Copycat."

BY ANTHONY LANE

Two new Holly Hunter films have arrived in theatres. Together, they give a good idea of what this actress can do. One of them, "Home for the Holidays," is what you might call a Holly picture, festive and endearing; the other, "Copycat," is leaner and more determined—definitely a Hunter movie. This isn't the first time she has landed a double punch; the coolest challenge for moviegoers in 1993 was to match the black-robed mute of "The Piano" with the blond chatterbox who stole "The Firm" from under the nose of Tom Cruise.



Back-to-back Holly Hunter: a reluctant homebody and a hot-shot detective.

ROBERT DEMICHIELL

In "Home for the Holidays," Hunter plays Claudia, a single mother with a teen-age daughter, a fear of flying, and a red nose. It's Thanksgiving, and Claudia is taking her bad cold and other problems home to her family. The opening scenes remind you how unbothered Hunter is by the demands of vanity: for someone so pretty, she seems remarkably content to dwindle into a complete wreck. Claudia, who has just lost her job as an art restorer, trails through the crammed Chicago airport looking raw, patchy, and washed out; swaying on the edge of collapse, she manages to stay in one piece only by gazing around and realizing that everyone else—everyone all over America, probably—is starting to crack, too. "Home for the Holidays," directed by Jodie Foster, from a screenplay by W. D. Richter, digs deep into this feeling of companionable catastrophe. It makes a meal out of Thanksgiving, trying hard to enhance a small domestic drama with a stronger national flavor. The film is carved into chunks, each headed by a title: "Flying," "Relatives," "Cleanup," and so on, until we arrive, with regrettable cuteness, at "The Point."

Foster has built herself a solid, multiple-speed cast of performers, but they struggle with characters who seem preassembled, worked up in advance of the action instead of being allowed to reveal themselves in the course of it. Claudia arrives home in Baltimore and witnesses the ritual gathering of the tribe. To begin with, there are her parents: Henry (Charles Durning), tubby and nostalgic, an old dog who plays "Puppy Love" on his electric organ; and Adele (Anne Bancroft), who stands in front of the mirror in bra and petticoat and contemplates her slackness and her crummy wig, like a Mrs. Robinson who never had a graduate to play with. You could make a whole movie out of Claudia and her parents, and the difficult, jagged sadness that stretches between them. Claudia annoys herself by continuing to behave in their presence like a young girl—sleeping in her childhood bedroom, smoking a furtive joint, and starting to panic when her mother raps on the door.

Jodie Foster, however, wants to spread the movie wide. She can't wait to

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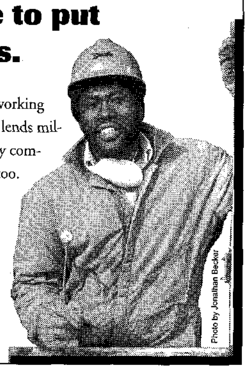

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sample other moods, like somebody skipping tracks on a new CD. She ushers in Claudia's gay brother, Tommy (Robert Downey, Jr.), and his friend Leo (Dylan McDermott); then come the eccentric Aunt Glady (Geraldine Chaplin) and Claudia's sister, Joanne (Cynthia Stevenson), who brings her boring husband (Steve Guttenberg) and their two children. Everyone sits down to Thanksgiving dinner, which, under the force of intensified editing, quickly splinters into farce. When a roast turkey the size of a basketball slipped under the carving knife and careered into the lap of the primly horrified Joanne, I began to wonder just how much weirder "Home for the Holidays" was going to get. The first hour, after all, had progressed from wintry melancholy to a sort of "National Lampoon's Turkey Toss." Where would it all end?

It all ends, I'm afraid, in a flurry of home movies: Claudia as a child, her brother on the beach—stuff like that. "Philadelphia" pulled the same trick, and I can't help thinking there ought to be a ten-year moratorium on the presence of home-movie footage, real or pretend, in grownup films. Michael Powell used it, in "Peeping Tom," and so did Paul Cox, in "Man of Flowers," but those films were disturbing, deviant works that forced you to ponder the roots of their heroes' mania, whereas the climax of "Home for the Holidays" feels more like a shortcut to an intensity that the movie has never really earned. It feels, in a word, sentimental—a disappointing way to close the picture, and one that seems out of kilter with Foster's watchful intelligence. In her screen performances, from "Taxi Driver" onward, she stayed well clear of sentimentality, but her last starring role, in Michael Apted's "Nell," was a bad slip; maybe some of that movie's wishful softness has rubbed off on her own directing. Most Hollywood big shots make fools of themselves when they try to both star and direct, but here I found myself wanting the whole deal: Foster not just behind the camera but in front of it, too, where she could have brought a cold touch of Clarice Starling to the proceedings and dried the movie's tears.

There's no mistaking how well Foster the director tunes in to her actors. The problem is that she doesn't know when to switch them off. Robert Dow-

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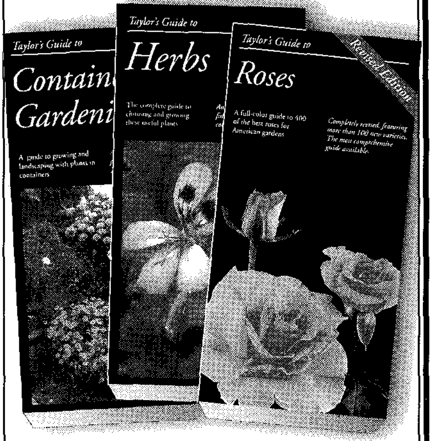

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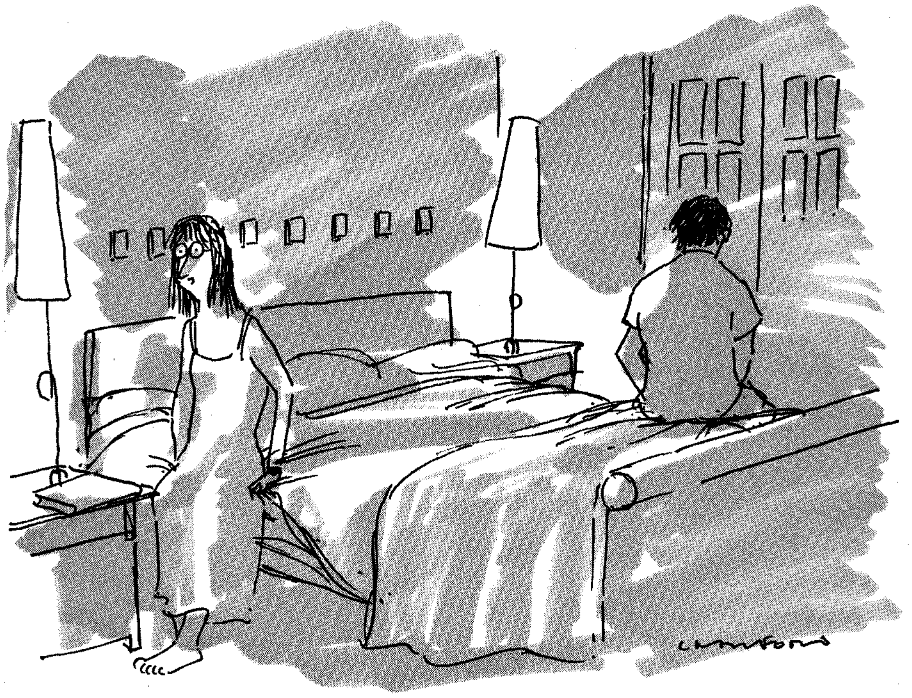


"Maybe we should start seeing other fiscal conservatives with social consciences."

• •

ney, Jr., for example, is the most skillful young actor in America; there's something dark and untrustworthy flickering behind the speedy comic riffs, and a glint of violence in his compulsive charm. (He was absolutely the right choice to play the lead in "Chaplin," however dire the rest of that movie.) But Foster does the worst thing possible: she lets him fly out of control. She does the same thing with Geraldine Chaplin, and both performances grow steadily more embarrassing. I suspect that Foster is seeking a kind of Anne Tyler tone—the ratty Baltimore warmth, the love of private jokes, the homeliness that takes in eccentrics and failures as if they were refugees. The fact that "Home for the Holidays" itself ends up as a failure—a noble and often funny one, but still a failure—shows how fiendishly hard it is to find and keep that artless Tyler balance, to prevent a natural charity toward provincial foibles from sagging into indulgence.

In the end, it's Holly Hunter who makes this movie. The other characters, each with a miniature plot attached, slide in and out of your attention, but she holds it fast throughout. As the family wages psychological warfare, Claudia appears to bloom, becoming calmer and more untouchable; maybe she finished that joint after all. The story demands that she reassert her affection for her parents, and also fall in love with Leo (who, whatever she thought, is not gay), but I didn't entirely buy these developments: to me, she looked increasingly like a woman ready to slip her moorings and cut herself free. Jodie Foster's movie is much more conservative than I thought it would be; after wavering for a while, it votes strictly and movingly for family values—for what Henry calls "all those old-fashioned pain-in-the-ass traditions." But Hunter's face tells another story: it speaks of a liberal restlessness, the will to experiment, or, at any rate, to start afresh. Whatever the Point is, she doesn't get it.

WHEN Claudia was a little girl, she was, according to her father, the bravest of his children. Looking at Holly Hunter—at that cheerful, chin-up attitude toward the world, allied with a perfectly level understanding of how treacherous the world can be—you can see that his verdict makes good sense. There is something fearless about her, almost frighteningly so. It's the one overlap between Claudia, in "Home for the Holidays," and M. J. Monahan, the San Francisco police detective Hunter plays in

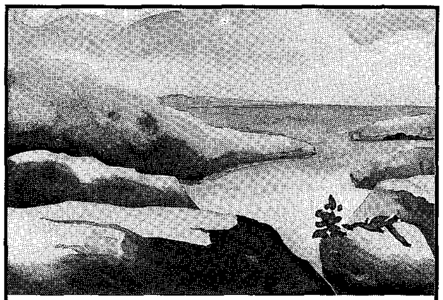
"Copycat." True, both characters wear their hemlines high, a tribute to the famously trim Hunter figure, but Claudia gets more bohemian as you go farther up (she even has a hip ethnic hat), whereas M.J. spends most of her time in neat professional suits. In the first scene, she also sports a fetching pair of safety glasses while taking in some target practice.

M.J. is on the trail of a killer. You'll never guess what kind. Give up? A *serial* killer—can you beat that? To be honest, I've had it with these repeat offenders. What ever happened to the old-fashioned, pain-in-the-ass tradition of the one-off murderer? The villain in "Copycat" is even more of a yawn than usual. What turns this guy on is to imitate the methods of previous serial killers: he can do you a Son of Sam, a fine Boston Strangler, and a couple of fresh Dahmers without breaking a sweat. What the director, Jon Amiel, and his screenwriters, Ann Biderman and Jay Presson Allen, fail to grasp is that their killer, though diligent and cunning, is also anesthetically dull: he is nothing but a parodist, and any hopes that he might turn out to be the ghost of Max Beerbohm are swiftly dashed. Even worse, the movie itself is a copycat: it borrows heavily from "The Silence of the Lambs" and other serialist works, and forgets to add any thrills of its own.

The story hinges on the presence of Sigourney Weaver. She plays Helen Hudson, a serial-murder expert who was attacked by one of her own case studies and has stayed home in terror ever since. Nevertheless, she likes to keep up, and soon she is advising M.J. on the best way to catch the baddie. I was looking forward to the women's scenes together: one of the surprising pleasures of recent thrillers has been the primacy of head-to-head conversations. (None of the torpedo attacks in "Crimson Tide" were half as much fun as Gene Hackman's fulminations against Denzel Washington.) There was no reason Sigourney Weaver and Holly Hunter couldn't match that sense of single combat, and Hunter's chirruping toughness should have tangled nicely with Weaver's high-cheekboned, faintly aristocratic neurosis, but it never happens. This isn't really their fault: the director fails to pick up any pulse of feeling between them, and the dialogue is no help at all. I would have liked to see Jodie Foster direct *this* movie, in fact; the loveliest moments in "Home for the Holidays" are nothing more than chance observations, as when the camera catches Hunter sticking out her tongue on a cold, wet afternoon, rudely tasting the air. (You don't need to be a woman to think of that, or to shoot it, but I suspect that a woman would be more likely to keep it in the finished film.) If Sigourney Weaver had stuck her tongue out at the killer, she might have stopped him dead.

But "Copycat" is bereft of such detail, or of anything else that smacks of ordinary life. It's one more dumb masculine reverie about female fear. Jon Amiel, who did such wonderful, intuitive work on Dennis Potter's "The Singing Detective," has been reduced to the kind of plastic style that involves cutting from the closeup of a woman's laughing mouth to the sound of a police siren. Scary. Reviewers were asked to reveal neither the identity of the murderer nor, even more absurdly, the ending: considering that I found myself writing down twists before they happened ("Body armor, ergo M.J. will survive shooting"), and then ticking them off as they did happen, it is only weariness that stops me from offering a précis of the entire plot.

Once again, it is Holly Hunter who comes to the rescue. All over Hollywood, films are being killed off by lousy copycat scripts, but she just about saves this nonsense from certain death. Braving the indignity of being called "the wee inspector" and the shame of having to say the line "Change your locks, tighten your security, and pray," she goes at the movie with a vengeance, all backbone and quick grins. When she sees a butchered body in a bathtub, she says "Wow" with no intonation at all; it's hardly a line, let alone a good one, but Hunter transforms it into the touching response of a woman who is struggling to keep her emotions flat, tidy, and out of the way. Somehow, she makes this vacuous movie feel like a pressurized zone; the screenplay is fake to the last inch, but Hunter gives us something to believe in. She may even make "Copycat" a hit. As she tells Sigourney Weaver, handing her a cup of coffee, "It's lousy, but it's hot." ♦



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SHOUTS & MURMURS

HEAD CASE

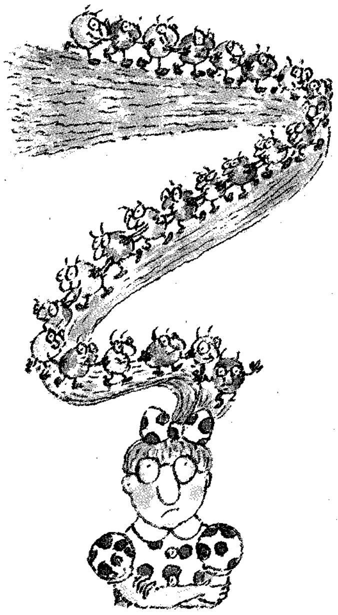
BY MARK SINGER

THE suburban town where I live is infested with journalists. Nobody really knows how this happened. The first ones moved in about ten years ago and started inviting friends from Manhattan and Brooklyn for brunch, and—like that—there went the neighborhood. I've been part of the problem for five years now.

Some local real-estate agents, who seem bizarrely oblivious of the low esteem in which most Americans hold Fourth Estaters, think we are a selling point—an amenity, like the easy commute, the handsome old houses within walking distance of the train, and the sweet red brick building where many of our children attend elementary school. The agents have tried to persuade some of us to scribble life-style feature stories about our presence in the community. The challenge, of course, would be to sound upbeat (i.e., property-value-enhancing) while obeying one's theoretical professional duty to be balanced. In other words, it would be wrong to omit that our kids are infested with head lice.

A defining moment occurred several weeks ago, during a little boy's birthday party at the home of a *Times* editor, when a *Wall Street Journal* reporter elected, either for reasons of public health or private squeamishness, to exile the dermatologically challenged children of a *Newsweek* mandarin. I heard about this from one of the grownups, whom I encountered during a back-to-school open house. This person inquired whether I had finished a book I've been writing—a topic I'm rather touchy about, because the book is a year overdue. I changed the subject: "No, but nice of you to ask. By the way, does your adorable daughter still have head lice?"

When you're a journalist, you get used to being called a nitpicker—even a bloodsucking parasite. Now, after hours, metaphor is our reality: come home from the office, turn on the high-intensity lamp, scrutinize every strand of your children's hair. A school memo quotes the principal to the effect that "the legality of a strict no-nits policy is unclear." The nits, or eggs, adhere to the hair shaft with a "natural" cement that the makers of Krazy Glue must have copied. Spending four hours a night nitpicking doesn't mean there's no time left for finger-pointing. Who cast the first louse? Who is our Patient Zero, our Typhoid Mary? "Who got sent home from school today?" parents ask children at pickup time. Whose house shall we torch?



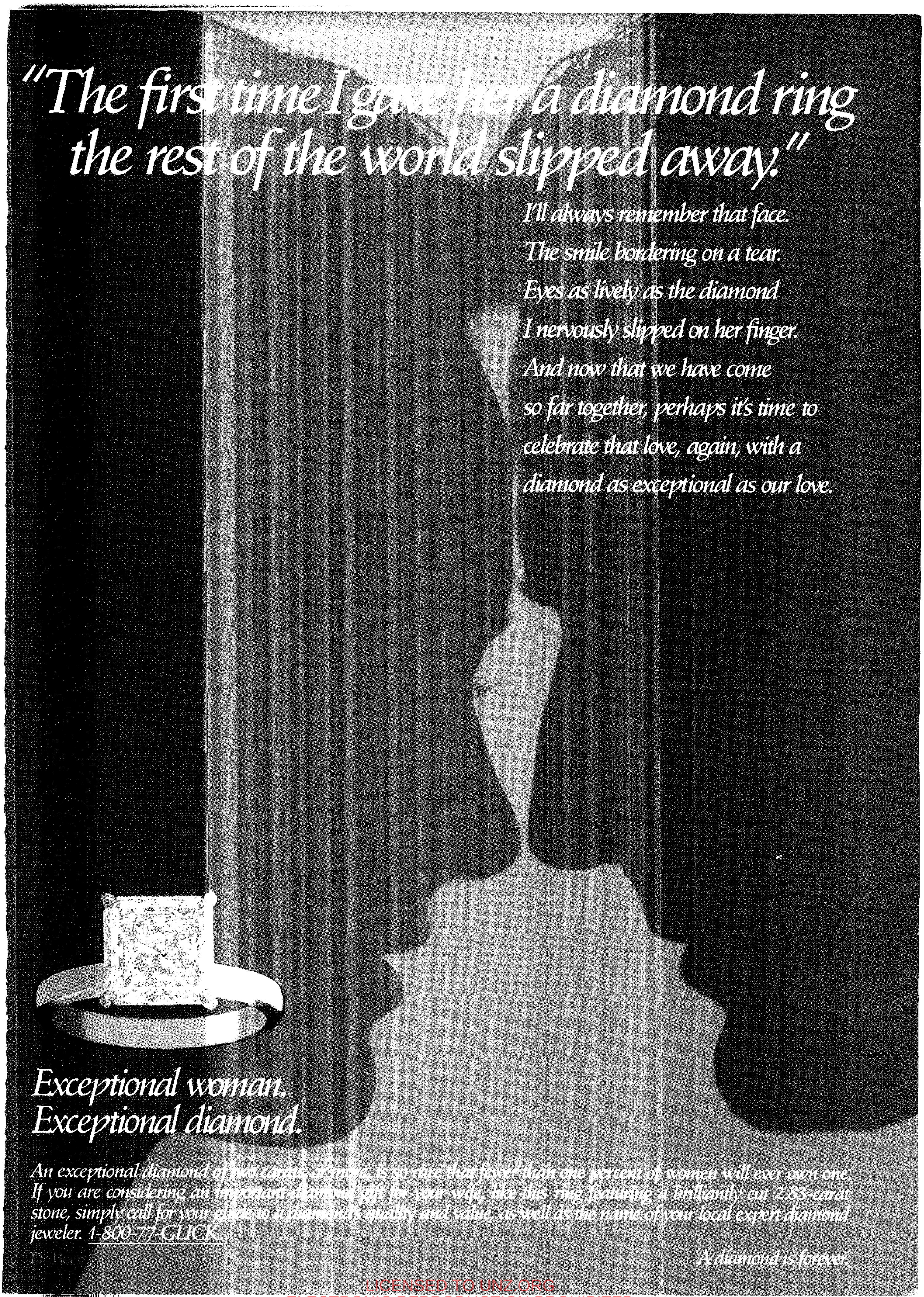
VICTORIA ROBERTS

Not everyone is hysterical. "It's only bugs, it's not gonna kill ya" is the attitude of a friend of mine. None of her three children has lice, though they have all had them in the past. When her son got them a few years ago, "there was, like, a conga line of them dancing in his hair." My friend confirmed a rumor I'd heard—that recently she prophylactically shampooed the entire family with Wonder Fluff, a flea-and-tick treatment for dogs. Previously, the only time anyone other than her retriever used Wonder Fluff, she said, was when some house guests "were feeling itchy."

This is traditionally a Republican town, but we do have a few Greenpeace types. One mom has been massaging her daughter's scalp with citronella oil. Its only drawback is that the lice don't seem to mind it. Reports abound that the standard over-the-counter treatments also disappoint. The scorched-earth strategy is to skip those steps, call the pediatrician, and ask him to prescribe an insecticide shampoo. The downside of the shampoo is that it causes brain damage. On the other hand, missing most of third grade is bad for you, too. Some repatriated foreign correspondents who imported au pairs from Eastern Europe are having trouble placating these nannies, who keep demanding to know why this sort of thing is allowed to endure in America. In the old Soviet bloc, evidently, they just hose you down with DDT.

The local weekly newspaper has largely ignored the crisis—its secret motto seems to be "All These Nits Too Few to Print" and has concentrated instead upon its proven strengths: hard-hitting gardening tips, field-hockey analyses, and investigative recipes that combine pumpkin, cauliflower, and clams.

The approach of winter remains a source of optimism; people are hoping lice dislike the cold. Until then, there's the option of sticking the kids in the freezer for a couple of weeks. Which, no doubt, would make a terrifically interesting life-style feature, or maybe even something for the front page. ♦



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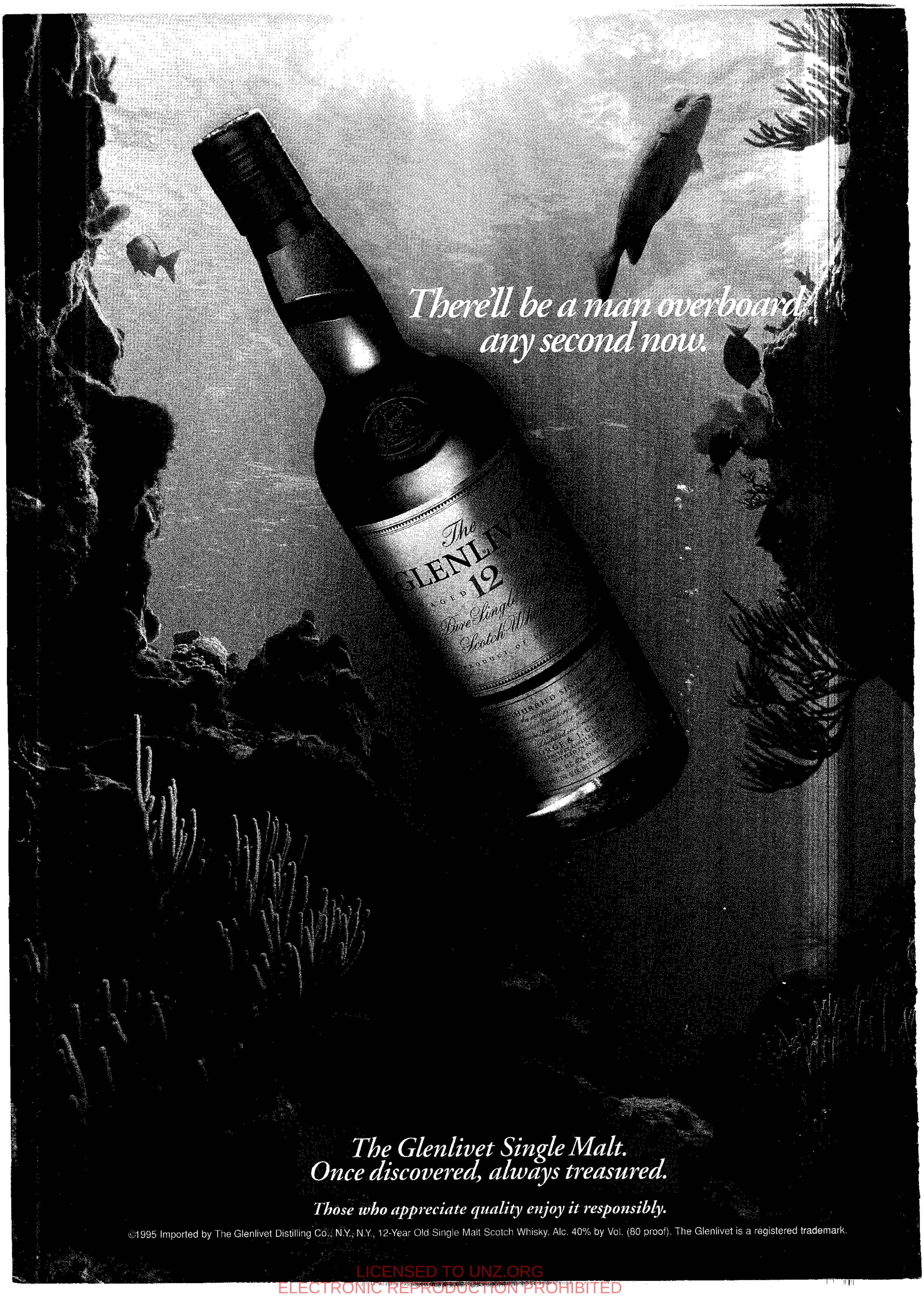
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